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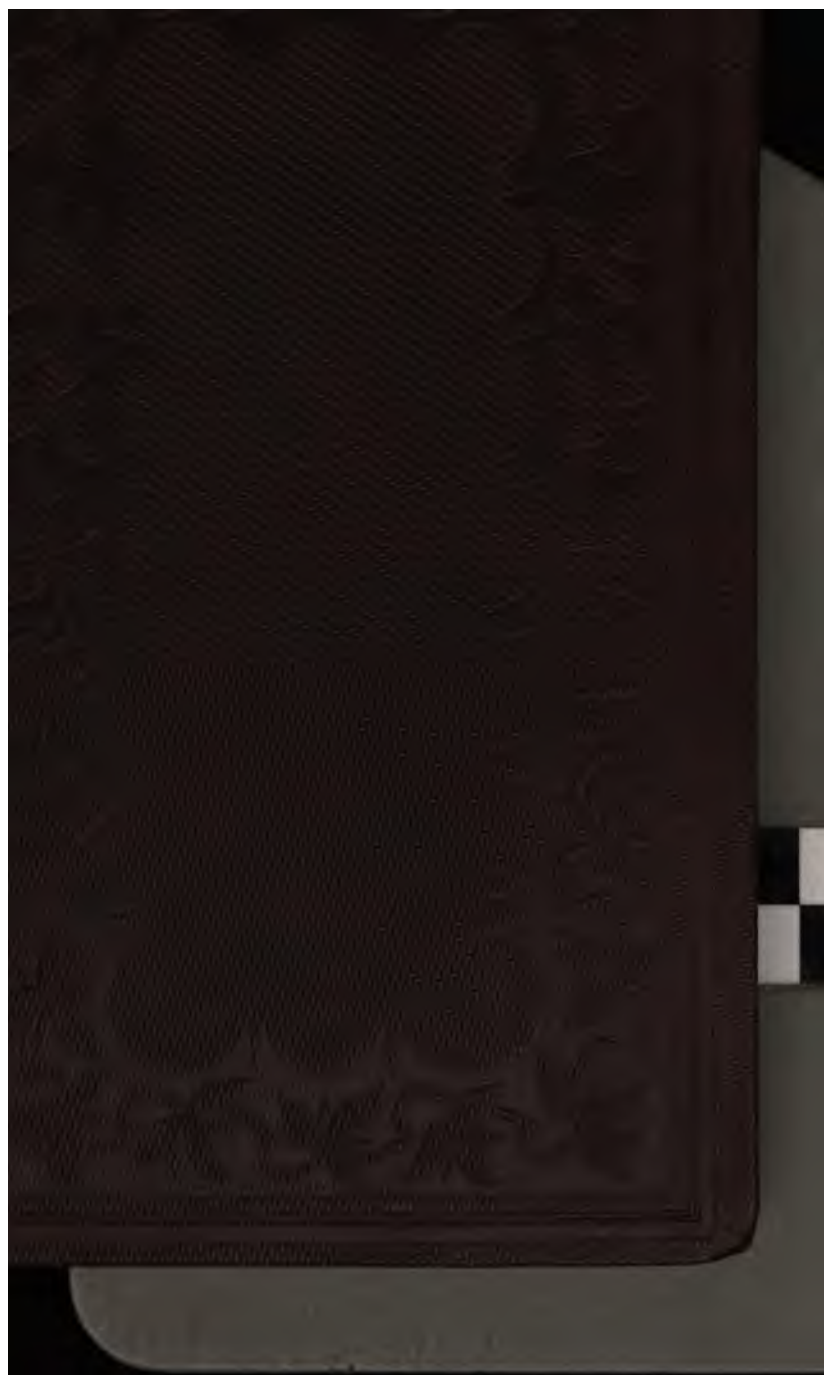
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PORT ROYAL,

AND ITS SAINTS:

BEING THE

"SELECT MEMOIRS OF PORT ROYAL,"

BY

M. A. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.



THE FIFTH EDITION, SOMEWHAT ABRIDGED.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE very name of Port Royal has been almost forgotten in this country : and the history of the christians who dwelt there, with the exception of the learned men who made themselves widely known by their literary labours, is little studied even by those who most deeply sympathize with their religious views and bitter persecutions. The Fourth Edition of the "SELECT MEMOIRS OF PORT ROYAL" by MRS. SCHIMMELPENNINCK has long been out of print : but, notwithstanding the extreme interest felt by all who have read it, the efforts made to reproduce the work in its original form were not attended with success. The Editor therefore sought, and at last obtained, permission from the venerable authoress to print a small edition, with such abridgments of the original narrative as might at the same time bring the price within the means of the many, and make it more generally interesting to numbers who, in these days, have not time for lengthy reading.

The only condition the authoress imposed upon him in the execution of his task, was that he should in no way tamper with the expression of religious opinions contained in the Memoirs. This would have been his course even without such condition. It has been his aim, not to make the Port Royalists speak in the language of his own theology, but to represent them as they were. He has not contented himself with a mere re-editing, but has carefully read the latest works on the subject, references to which will be found in the notes ; and also a sufficient number of the original documents, free access to which has been most kindly afforded to him, to

satisfy himself of the truthfulness of Mrs. Schimmelpenninck's labours.

Her introduction, and through her the introduction of the English public to a knowledge of Port Royal, is somewhat remarkable. A lady of considerable literary celebrity sent a number of books to Mrs. S. with a note to this effect :—" I cannot read French ; you can. I hate the Catholics ; you do not. If you can make any use of them, they are at your service." How many are deterred from reading the lives and writings of some of the greatest saints that the Church has ever seen, by similar prejudice ! We shall be surprised if any can peruse the following work without feeling grief or shame at comparing the effects of what he supposes the purer light in his own life with that of the Saints of Port Royal.

This work is but the portal to a vast treasure house of Christian Biography which the history of Port Royal presents. The life of Jaqueline Pascal, lately published, conducts us into one of the chambers. The Editor is confident that a most interesting Volume might be prepared, containing not only the accounts of Jansenius, St. Cyran, the Domestics of Port Royal, the Bishop of Alet, De Rancé and the Trappists, which remain from Mrs. S.'s original work ; but also several, as yet untranslated, from the "*Vies Edifiantes*" and other works carefully collected by Mrs. S., and from the original autographs to which the Principal of the Jansenist College most kindly admitted him, when visiting the ruins of Port Royal.

Nothing would be more congenial to his feelings, than to undertake the labour of this second work, should the circulation of this volume justify his anticipations of its usefulness. Meanwhile he prays that the Lord of the Vineyard may bless to His glory this humble effort in His service.

P. P. C.

Warrington : July, 1855.

PORT ROYAL.

CHAPTER I.

*Institution of Port Royal, and Reform by the Mère Angélique.
Interview with her father.*

THE monastery of Port Royal was situated in a wooded valley near Chevreuse, about eight miles South West from Versailles and eighteen from Paris. It was founded in the year 1204 by Mathilde, wife of the Lord of Marli, of the house of Montmorenci. The church was erected by the same architect who built the cathedral at Amiens, and was distinguished for the beauty of its architecture.

The discipline of this monastery declined in process of time. Like the generality of religious houses of the Cistercian order to which it belonged, it exhibited, towards the close of the sixteenth century, a lamentable and awful degree of relaxation. The rule of St. Benedict was scarcely known there. The retirement of the cloister was unobserved. The revenues, which ought to have been distributed in charity, were converted to purposes of luxury. Self indulgence and a worldly spirit influenced the whole community.

At this juncture the abbess died. It was then a very common abuse to appoint children to ecclesiastical offices, in order to secure the revenue to the family. The presentation was in the hands of M. Arnauld, two of whose daughters, Angélique and Agnès, play a conspicuous part in the scenes about to be described.

When quite children, Angélique being seven and Agnès scarcely five years old, their grandfather told them they should both be nuns. "Since you wish it, grandpapa, I am very

willing," returned the oldest, "but then it is on condition that I shall be abbess." "You shall both be abbesses, my dears," replied their grandfather. At this, the children, quite delighted, ran to announce their new dignity to the whole house. Presently, however, the little Agnès returned to her grandfather with a grave and thoughtful countenance, and asked to speak to him alone. Astonished at the child's serious look, he asked her what was the matter. "Grandpapa," said she, "I come to tell you I will not be abbess: I hear that abbesses will give an account to God of the souls under their care, and I have been considering that I shall have enough to do to take care of my own." "Not I," said the future reformer, the little Angélique, who was following her; "I for my part will be abbess; and I will take good care, grandpapa, to make my nuns thoroughly do their duty."

Marie Angélique Arnauld was nominated abbess of Port Royal, before she had completed her eleventh year. She was scarcely eight years old, when she assumed the habit of the order. At nine she made her profession before the General of the order of Cîteaux.* He gave her his benediction eighteen months afterwards.

How deep are judgments of God, and his ways past finding out! How little probability did there appear that the child, thus iniquitously elected, should prove the very instrument in his hands to restore the discipline of the order, and to lay the foundation of the glories of Port Royal! The nuns rejoiced at the appointment: they promised themselves a long period of unbounded liberty. Their joy was not of very long duration. The young abbess at first, indeed, only thought of devising means of passing her time agreeably. Yet it was soon observed, that if her occupations bore no marks of piety, her very recreations were such as indicated a powerful and vigorous mind, a sound judgment, and a superior degree of intelligence. Her favourite book was Plutarch's Lives; a work which, it has often been justly observed, has laid the foundation of more great characters than perhaps any other.

It is reported that Henry IV. being on a hunting excursion in this neighbourhood, some of the young nobility of his court

* The Abbot of Cîteaux in Burgundy was the *General* or *Head* of the Cistercian monks. These were a branch of the great Benedictine order, also called Bernardine, from the celebrated St. Bernard, abbot of Cîteaux.—*Ed.*

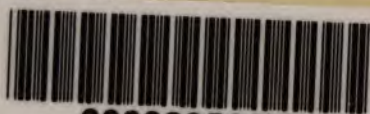
came one morning to make an idle visit at the monastery soon after the M. Angélique's appointment. The little abbess came down at the head of all her nuns, with her crosier in her hand, and turned them all out of the monastic precincts; at which the king was so delighted that he came to the brow of the hill, saying that he must needs wave his hands to the little abbess; which he accordingly did very respectfully.

Scarcely had she attained the age of seventeen, before God was pleased to effect her conversion by means most unlikely. A capuchin, wearied of a monastic life, had emancipated himself from his superiors. It is said that his conduct had, in many respects, been reprehensible. At any rate he determined to quit France, and to abjure the Catholic religion. It so happened that he passed through Port Royal on his way. Being entirely ignorant of his misconduct, the abbess, from motives of civility, requested him to preach. The capuchin, meanwhile, was as little acquainted with the characters of the nuns, as they were with his. He imagined them to be eminently pious. He therefore preached a most alarming discourse. He expatiated largely on the misery and dangers of sin, and on the power and blessings of true religion. He also dwelt forcibly on the dangers of the world; and portrayed, in the most lively manner, those peculiar advantages which are furnished by a monastic life.

The young abbess was forcibly struck. From that hour she formed the resolution to devote herself wholly to God: and not only so, but she resolved by divine grace that, as soon as she was converted herself, she would strengthen her sisters, and reform every abuse in the monastery committed to her charge.

At this period she was taken dangerously ill. During a confinement of several months, her resolution strengthened, and her piety and experience deepened. Meditation, prayer, and reading the Scriptures, divided her solitary hours. She came from her chamber a new person. Her habits, her manners, her views, were totally changed. Her mind was always powerful. Those powers which had been employed in the gratification of self, were now exercised in establishing a solid and beneficial reform.

The relaxed state in which the young abbess found her monastery, has been already mentioned. Their ignorance of



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carriages was heard on the brow of the hill, and winding along the avenue; and, a moment after, a loud and redoubled knocking at the grand entrance-gate, announced that the company was come. The M. Angélique, who on the first sound of the carriages, had arisen and gone to the gate herself, opened the wicket. M. Arnauld commanded her to throw open the great gates. She, clasping her hands in the humblest attitude of entreaty, besought him to go into a little parlour by the side of the gate, where she might speak to him. Her father, astonished, repeated his commands, urging and insisting upon compliance: then, rising louder and louder in tone, in a voice of thunder he commanded her instantly to unbar the gates. The young abbess, pale and trembling, looked up to God; then with a tremulous voice, but with a determined mind, repeated the same entreaties. M. Arnauld, absolutely enraged at this unexpected resistance, spoke in the harshest manner to his daughter, upbraiding her with the foulest ingratitude. M. d'Andilly, then about nineteen, young and full of fire, assumed a still higher tone; and thinking to avenge a supposed outrage to his father and mother, overwhelmed his sister with the most insulting and injurious epithets. The outcry was dreadful; and the alarm was spread on all sides, both within and without the convent. Nor did the nuns forget that M. Arnauld was a munificent patron, without whose benefactions the community must have wanted, as it might yet be destitute of, the first necessities of life. The firmness however of the M. Angélique remained unshaken.

M. Arnauld, finding that he made no progress, demanded his two daughters* who then resided in the convent, to be brought out to him immediately. The M. Angélique, collected and tranquil in the midst of the storm, gave one of the confidential sisters the key of a little door which opened into the church, and charged her to let the two sisters out by that private door. The two children advanced, with much thoughtfulness and gravity of manner, each in her little nun's dress. M. d'Andilly, seeing them approach, ran up to meet them, and began inveighing most bitterly against their eldest sister. The little abbess Agnès, with much of her characteristic mildness and gravity, calmly replied, "My brother, our sister

* The M. Agnes, who had been nominated abbess of St. Cyr, when only six years old; and her sister Marie Claire, at that time nine years old.

has done nothing amiss. She has only performed her duty, and what she is enjoined and obliged to observe, by the ecclesiastical canons of the council of Trent." The young man could scarcely forbear laughing at the solemnity of the little Abbess's address, and the demure gravity with which it was delivered ; but his rage got the better of him.

At last M. Arnauld, seeing that he prevailed nothing, determined to return, and ordered the horses. He handed his family into the carriages, remaining himself last ; till, as he was putting his foot on the step, he suddenly paused ; and turning back, said he must go for a moment into the parlour, to say one final word to the abbess. The M. Angélique entered on the other side ; but scarcely had she opened the blinds of the grate, when she perceived an expression of grief in her father's countenance, which affected her beyond expression. He paused, as though composing his voice with difficulty ; and then, with effort and in a very few words, said that she could not but remember the early kindness and affection he had always shewn her ; that he looked from her, his eldest daughter, for affection, the only reward a parent wishes ; but that her ingratitude compelled him in his declining years to declare a final farewell : for he was fully determined never to see her face more. He then paused ; and with a look of the deepest feeling added, "I shall indeed never see you more ; yet for my sake oh spare your health, I entreat you ; and, if you have a spark of the remembrance of my affection left, do not injure it by indiscreet austerities."

Hitherto the natural strength of her character, or rather the grace of God shed abroad in her heart, had supported the M. Angélique ; but at this totally unexpected appeal, and above all at the touching manner in which it was delivered, her heart was pierced with the most poignant grief ; her body could no longer endure the severity of the conflict ; she fainted, and fell motionless and senseless at his feet.

In an instant the whole face of affairs was changed. M. Arnauld no longer remembered any offence. He only felt he was a father. Doubtful whether his daughter retained life, he called, and cried, and knocked for help. But the sisters, instead of running to the parlour, took flight, supposing the doors of the monastery were about to be forced open. At length, with much difficulty, they were made to understand that they were

wanted instantly to assist her. When she began to recover and open her eyes, she saw her father still at the grate, and in the greatest uneasiness. With much difficulty, she made an effort to speak, and besought him not to leave Port Royal that day. The request was now become unnecessary. The past was already forgotten. M. Arnauld only thought of the situation of his daughter, and promised to accede to all her wishes. A little bed was then brought down to her in the parlour, on which she was laid; and M. Arnauld having remained at Port Royal all that and the following day, M. Angélique calmly, but with every mark of deep feeling, explained to him the reasons of her conduct.

No sooner was tranquillity thus unexpectedly established, than the M. Agnès and her sister were allowed again to enter the convent, and everything went on as usual.

From that memorable day, called in the annals of Port Royal, the "wicket day," the M. Angélique found the firmest support from every member of her own family. Thus the very day on which she was enabled, by divine grace, to abandon father, mother, brother, sister, yea, and almost her own life also, to follow Christ, she received a hundred fold, by laying the foundation of the permanence of her reform, and of the conversion and warm co-operation of every member of her numerous family, besides that of an innumerable company of saints, now rejoicing with her in the presence of Him at whose right hand are rivers of joy and pleasures for evermore.

CHAPTER II.

The Reform completed at Port Royal, and established at other Monasteries. Madame d'Etrées.

IN five years, the monastery of Port Royal had become completely changed. The whole community presented a pattern of piety, charity, industry, self-denial, regularity and every good work.

The abbess was seconded in all her exertions by her younger sister, the M. Agnès de St. Paul. She was not distinguished for the same masculine energy of mind and resolute spirit as the M. Angélique: she rather possessed passive than active strength of character. But her understanding was solid, though not brilliant; her mind was well stored by studies not common to her sex; her judgment was clear and accurate; her heart and affections temperate and well balanced. Her disposition was placid, and she had feared God from her earliest youth. She had ever been distinguished for unfeigned humility, and for a warm admiration of her sister.

The fame of Port Royal and of the M. Angélique, soon extended itself over all France. Numbers of pious individuals, in different convents, had long been mourning in secret over the relaxation of their own communities. They earnestly desired a restoration of the ancient discipline, but knew not where to begin. In this perplexity, they applied to the abbess of Port Royal; and petitions were sent from various convents, entreating her to undertake the establishment of the reform they so anxiously wished for. At first she replied that she had no authority to quit her own monastery. Requests were however made by such a multiplicity of houses, that she was at length ordered, by the General of the order, either to go in person, or to send some of her community, in order to establish the reform wherever it was desired.

The M. Agnès, having now been for some years initiated into the plans of her sister, was equally competent with herself either to supply her place at Port Royal, or to carry on the reform elsewhere. These ladies, or some of their principal assistants, successively visited the monasteries of Maubuisson, Lys, St. Aubin, St. Cyr, Gomerfontaine, Tard, the Isles d'Auxerres, and many other places. In several of these houses, they met with opposition which might furnish the subject of volumes. In none did they meet with more difficulties than at Maubuisson.

It was in the year 1619 that the M. Angélique received an order from the General of Citeaux to undertake the temporary direction of that richly endowed monastery, whose abbess had been lately expelled on account of her irregular conduct, in order to establish a solid and permanent reformation, before a new superior was nominated.

The deposed Abbess, Mde. d'Etrées, was sister to the celebrated Gabrielle d'Etrées; and it was through her influence that she had been translated by Henry IV, in a very disgraceful manner, and contrary to the rules of the house, to the important and lucrative post of abbess to the monastery of Maubuisson; which was one of the most powerful and opulent abbeys in the kingdom. A very considerable number of Baronies and Seigneuries belonged to it, including many villages; the whole civil authority in these districts belonged to the Abbess, and to courts of her appointment, which possessed little less than absolute powers. The conduct of Mde. d'Etrées, during the five and twenty years in which she presided over this vast establishment, corresponded but too well with the unholy grounds of her nomination. The infamy of her evil report spread throughout the land, and went on increasing, till the scandalous irregularities of the community became a public disgrace to the order; so that Louis XIII, being informed of their proceedings, issued a peremptory order to the Abbot and General of Citeaux, in 1617, commanding him to institute an immediate inquiry into their conduct, and apply without delay the most powerful and efficacious remedies.

The abbot, being an amiable as well as pious man, wished to conduct this disagreeable affair with all possible tenderness to the parties concerned. He therefore commissioned a few of the most pious and venerable persons of his order to visit the

monastery in a private manner ; informing themselves on the spot how far the reports which had gone abroad were well-founded. After which, they were to take an opportunity of respectfully but firmly remonstrating with the abbess on the impropriety of her conduct ; inviting her to reform her monastery, and to prevent any further step being necessary by herself introducing regularity and discipline into her community, and thus doing away with all those grounds of public scandal, which had given rise to an investigation on the part of the throne itself ; and which, in all events, must ultimately terminate in the establishment of a most thorough reform.

These venerable delegates were exceedingly ill received. Nay, so far was the abbess from paying them the respect due both to their character and their official capacity, that she actually seized and imprisoned them in one of the towers of her abbey, where she subjected them to the most infamous treatment : and even went so far as to detain them many days without food. Well aware of the weight of influence of her own extensive and powerful family connections, she imagined that the abbot would never dare to provoke the overwhelming crush of their united opposition, by any further procedure. Having therefore ignominiously dismissed his commissioners, she vainly flattered herself that the whole business was for ever set at rest.

Affairs continuing on exactly the same footing, if indeed they did not grow worse ; the abbot, who was still unwilling to resort to harsh measures, sent a second commissioner in due form, and accompanied by several attendants. The abbess incarcerated him and all his suite in one of the towers of the abbey ; keeping them close prisoners, and allowing them nothing but bread and water. Nay, she even carried her audacity and insolence to so unprecedented a length, as to have them severely scourged every day. Happily however they contrived, after four days, to effect their escape by squeezing through the narrow window of their dungeon and then letting themselves down.

The General, seeing that nothing was to be gained by condescension to this froward lady, immediately repaired to Paris, in order to confer with her relatives, among whom were two Cardinals and a Field Marshal, on the best means of checking disorders which brought down a scandal not merely on

the ancient order of Cîteaux, but also on their own noble family. They were themselves, at this juncture, highly incensed against the abbess, because she had clandestinely married her younger sister, when on a visit at Maubuisson, to the Count de Sanzé, who, with many other gay and dissolute young men, was accustomed to spend nearly the whole of his time in this ill-regulated monastery.

Having obtained the concurrence of her relatives, the Abbot announced his intended visit to Mde. d'Etrées; and immediately after made his appearance, with a numerous retinue, at the gates of the abbey. He was received by the nuns alone, without their superior. It was in vain that he repeatedly sent to request the favour of her company; and afterwards summoned her to take her place, as abbess, in the chapter he was about to hold: the lady sent a positive refusal; nor could any solicitations induce her to make her appearance. He then assembled the whole community in the chapter house; and having officially declared the object of his visit, he interrogated each of the nuns privately on the state of discipline in the monastery: after which he again sent a polite message to Mde. d'Etrées, requesting her to meet him in the assembled chapter. This she absolutely and in the most unqualified terms refused to do. After repeated expostulations, all of which were in vain, the abbot sent her his official mandate, as General of the order, instantly to appear, in compliance with his citation, as abbess of the monastery of Maubuisson. This mandate she contemned, in the same manner as the rest.

Nothing more remained to be done. The abbot concluded his visit, drew up his report, and departed to Paris, where he gave a full account of his unsuccessful visit to the lady's relatives. He then laid the whole affair before the king; submitting to his Majesty that the only method which remained was, to expel the abbess who opposed the reform, and introduce a superior of a different description. He then obtained a commission to arrest Mde. d'Etrées, and to put her under confinement in the convent of the Filles Penitents de St. Marie, at Paris.

Accordingly, the General and his suite, accompanied by the Provost and a numerous detachment of archers, arrived at Maubuisson on Feb. 2rd, 1618. Even in this last visit, he did not depart from his accustomed lenity and humanity:

On his arrival, he at first drove up to the gates, unaccompanied by any of the civil power, and again requested the abbess to come down to speak to him. On her obstinate refusal, he still redoubled his solicitations: nay, so great was the meekness and moderation of this truly christian prelate, that he delayed, for the space of two whole days, making any use of the armed escort he had brought. During the whole of this time, he reiterated the most earnest expostulations, and used every argument which could be suggested, to induce her to submit, and by voluntarily quitting the convent to avoid the disgrace of a legal arrest. But after waiting a considerable time, and finding all his efforts vain, he at length had recourse to the secular arm.

Admittance being refused to the prelate and his escort, and the gates being barred against them, they were forcibly burst open in order to seize the abbess. This lady, who had not risen, hearing an unusual noise and suspecting the cause of the commotion, had jumped out of bed, and without waiting to put on her clothes ran to conceal herself. Almost the whole day was spent in making a search for her. At last she was discovered, shivering and half frozen with cold; when she was carried into her bed again to recover herself before she set out. But as she still put off rising from hour to hour on various pretexts, the provost, after waiting till the middle of the next day, ordered four of his archers to take her up on her mattress, wrapped in blankets as she lay, and to put her and her bed in the carriage which was waiting. He then conducted her with an armed escort to the place of her exile.

The General then assembled the community, and declared to the nuns that he was about to establish a thorough reform in the monastery, and that he should place over them a vicegerent, whom they should obey as their abbess, until the nomination of a new superior. He next proceeded to Port Royal, to acquaint the M. Angélique with his design, and to give her his official commission to undertake the reform and the temporary superiority of the monastery of Maubuisson.

The M. Angélique accepted with perfect submission the irksome and unthankful task thus unexpectedly imposed upon her. She left her prioress, with the assistance of her sister the M. Agnès, to govern in her absence; and selected three nuns to take with her and assist in establishing the reform.

The abbot first conducted her for a week to her father's house, whilst he himself went to Maubuisson, in order to dispose the nuns to receive their new superior, which they were most extremely reluctant to do, as soon as they were informed who she was. When he returned with the M. Angélique, it happened that the nuns were in the choir hastily reciting the office. As soon as the service was over and the doors of enclosure opened, the abbot presented their new superior to the whole assembled community. They received her respectfully, but with the utmost coldness. The M. Angélique, on the other hand, whose childhood had been spent in the monastery of Maubuisson, met them with the utmost frankness and cordiality, embracing several of them whom she recognized as being amongst her former companions.

The community at this time consisted of two and twenty nuns, almost all of whom might be said to be destitute of every distinction which should mark the members of a religious order, except their dress. Most of them, indeed, had embraced a monastic life, contrary to their inclinations. Their ignorance was gross in the extreme. They were scarcely acquainted with the first rudiments of christianity. The monk, whose negligence awfully profaned the sacred and holy office of their confessor, took not the least pains to give them any instruction. He contented himself with hearing whatever they pleased to tell him, or indeed suggesting their confession himself, by repeating a list of sins, and urging them to say yes or no to each. Nay, such was the grievous state of irreligion in this unholy community, and to so fearful a length did their blasphemous profanation extend, that they at length imagined the expedient of drawing up three or four schemes of confession, which, when they could no longer defer attending the confessional, they mutually lent each other. The sacred offices of divine service were performed with the most indecent negligence and precipitation; in order to afford more space for the vain and dissipated amusements in which they consumed the whole of those lives which they had solemnly vowed exclusively to dedicate to the service of God. Cards, games of chance, and theatrical performances, were among their most usual amusements. Frequently they gave entertainments, and parties not always of the most select society, in the spacious arbours of the magnificent gardens belonging

to the monastery. Often the abbess took her whole community to walk on the terrace of the lakes which supplied them with fish, and which were situated near the high road to Paris. Here they were met by the monks of the abbey of St. Martin of Pontoise, a monastery apparently no better regulated than their own, when they openly and unblushingly spent their summer evenings in dancing on the grass plat of the terrace.

These disorders were but the beginning of their excesses. Perhaps there can be no greater proof of the inconsistency of frivolous amusement with genuine christianity, than observing how scandalous and shocking those very things appear to us in persons devoted to God by the vow of a religious order, which we think nothing of among our friends who are yet bound by an equally awful vow, and an equally solemn sanction to renounce the vanities as well as the pomps of the world.

Such were the scenes of disorder which awaited the pious abbess of Port Royal. Undismayed, though fully sensible of the difficulties she was about to encounter, she armed herself with a holy courage, resolved to go on in the strength of her Lord. Nor were her three excellent companions less penetrated with the same feelings. The M. Angélique did not indeed attempt to conceal from them the arduous nature of the task to which they were called. "My dear sisters," said she, "it may be necessary, and very probably will be necessary, that not only our health but our lives should be sacrificed in order to the accomplishment of this work; but the work is a work of God." She may have recollected the speech of St. Cyran to a timid disciple, who was advised to abandon a known duty on account of his health: "*Sir, it is necessary that we should do the will of God; but it is not necessary that we should live.*"

The first step of the M. Angélique's reformation was the exclusion of all worldly company, and the strict re-establishment of the rules of enclosure. She was however soon convinced that it would be utterly impossible to effect any permanent or solid reform, without forming a company of new nuns, whose members should be adequate both to set an example, and to restrain the license of the old ones. She therefore obtained permission to receive novices. The fame of the M. Angélique, and the celebrity of the reform of Port Royal, had been very widely diffused; and hence a large number

of applications for admission crowded in upon her from every quarter. From amongst eighty persons who presented themselves as postulants, she selected thirty, whom, after a vigorous trial, she judged to possess a solid vocation.

The chief attention of the M. Angélique and her three companions, was now devoted to inform the minds, enlighten the consciences, and form the habits of these novices. In addition to this, she had the whole and sole charge of the vast temporal and spiritual concerns of the immense and rich abbey of Maubuisson, with all its numerous appendages. In this arduous post, her capacious mind not only traced an enlightened plan of reform in the regulation of her monastery, and the administration of justice in the sphere of its external jurisdiction: but the most minute details did not escape her vigilant attention and sagacious eye. She not only laboured incessantly in the religious instruction of the novices, but her care and personal exertions extended to every particular of their monastic observances. She even frequently assisted in teaching them the proper mode of reciting the service, in order that it might be performed in a devotional manner. Nay, she imposed upon herself the restraint of dining and spending a great part of the day in the novitiate, on purpose to inspect their whole behaviour and progress.

Accordingly the monastery of Maubuisson soon assumed an entirely new character, and exhibited a totally different appearance. The solemn and devotional performance of the offices of the choir; a liturgical chant, supported by voices clear and distinct, yet sweet and grave; a uniform habit of laborious industry; a strict economy and self-denial; and a noble generosity and extensive charity, were soon established by the M. Angélique in this little family, whose exertions she animated by her own zeal, and by giving them an example in the performance even of the most servile and laborious offices. Instead of installing herself in the vast and elegant apartments of the abbess, she appropriated them as an infirmary, and selected for herself precisely the most inconvenient and the smallest cell in the house. Nay, she set an example even to the lay sisters;* being often the first to sweep the passages, carry in the fire wood, wash the dishes, weed the gardens, &c. Whilst she cheerfully assisted in all these laborious offices herself

* servants of the establishment, who were not bound by monastic vows.—*Ed.*

she alike inspired her little family by her zeal, and softened the rigour of their labours by words of comfort and edification. Thus were the services requisite to this immense establishment performed regularly, without noise, hurry, or distraction.

Even the nuns who had been the original inhabitants of Maubuisson, began by degrees to admire and reverence, and even to love their new superior; and to regard with favour the little community growing up round her, which at first they had beheld with jealous eyes. The abbess showed them every sort of attention and kindness; not only behaving to them in the most respectful manner herself, but insisting on their being treated with marked deference and respect by the whole of her little community. She likewise ordered them to be served in everything and obeyed with the utmost punctuality to the most minute particular not inconsistent with the rules of the house. This indeed was sometimes not a little difficult; as the old nuns seemed at first inclined purposely to try to the utmost the patience of their new superior and her little company. They soon however perceived that the M. Angélique on all occasions, except where her duty was concerned, was willing to deny herself whenever it could be the means of affording them any comfort. Nor did they fail to observe, that in the midst of all her arduous cares, she always found time to pay a visit every evening to one of the old nuns who was blind, and to stay with her during the time of the evening meal, to cheer and console her by innocently amusing or edifying conversation.

Her kind manners and friendly attentions began gradually to dissipate the prejudices entertained by the nuns not only against herself but against the reform. The piety, thoughtfulness, heavenly mindedness and humble modesty of her three companions, produced a deep impression in their minds, and filled them with sincere admiration and esteem. Those who were well disposed began to entertain the most friendly sentiments towards their new inmates. They seemed never tired with contemplating them. Their christian demeanour, their guarded yet kind manners, the heavenly expression of their countenances, and the very inflexions of their voice, seemed wholly new to them. They had never beheld anything at all similar: and their new companions appeared to them as inhabitants of a distinct world. Nay, those amongst the old nuns who

would not confess themselves so quickly won over, were frequently seen stopping, as they passed the Port Royal nuns in the course of their daily occupations, and turning round to look after them and to contemplate them at leisure ; so new and so delightful did their heavenly deportment appear. In the course of some months, with the exception of a very few among the oldest associates of Mde. d'Etrées, who yielded however a decent external conformity, the whole became disposed very cordially to enter into the views of the M. Angélique. Such was the reform established by these young but devoted christians, whose abbess, though several years older than themselves, was yet at that time not quite seven and twenty.

Indeed long before the arrival of the Mère Angélique, two or three of the nuns amongst the community of Maubuisson, had always been distinguished by the respectability of their conduct. It cannot be said that they had any distinct religious views, and they were totally devoid of instruction ; but they were sincere in their obedience to the light they had ; they endeavoured conscientiously to discharge their outward duties, and they most sincerely mourned over the scandalous disorders which disgraced their monastery : and though they had neither the capacity nor the authority necessary to effect a reformation, they had long done all that lay in their power to stem the torrent of iniquity. Amongst other examples on record, one instance is too honourable to remain wholly unnoticed, even in this brief sketch.

The ancient prioress of Maubuisson was a lady of the house of Cleri ; she had indeed but little religious instruction, and at first still less religious vocation : but, finding herself engaged in the sacred obligation of monastic vows, she endeavoured conscientiously to discharge her duty, by a punctual observance of the rules of her house ; nor did she ever swerve from it, although she stood alone in a monastery, where her abbess and the whole community discountenanced all that was good. Discreet, disinterested, and conscientious, she used all her efforts to maintain union in her distracted community, and to preserve the morals of its degraded inhabitants.

She saw with deep sorrow that the doors of the abbatial side of the house were constantly open ; and that the very apartment of their superior was the continual place of resort of a profligate court. The celebrated Gabrielle d'Etrées lived

with her sister the abbess, and both were equally involved in scenes of dissipation too painful to dwell on. Under this apparently remediless evil, the good prioress resolved not to remit her efforts, however unavailing. Destitute of the religious authority necessary to oppose her abbess, destitute of clear light to exhort her sisters, she continued to maintain the most respectable and prudent conduct herself. She always kept possession of the key of enclosure next the cloister : and by the sincerity of her intentions and the uprightness of her demeanour, she gained over two or three of the nuns, who united with her in resisting the torrent of iniquity.

This truly respectable nun was in a state of constant solicitude, because the king, Henry IV., was perpetually spending his time in the monastery, with all the most dissipated young noblemen of his court ; nor did either the king, his retinue, or the abbess leave any means untried to allure the community into their society and dissipations. For a long while the vigilance of the prioress effectually baffled their endeavours. But at length, the king suddenly arrived with a numerous retinue and armed escort, at an hour when he was least expected, just as the nuns were retiring from church. He immediately sent one of his courtiers and bade him rush to the gate of the cloister and endeavour to enter, by force or artifice, before it could be closed. The nobleman had reached the gate just as the sister Ambrosia, one of Mde. Cleri's confidential nuns, was shutting it. He pushed it open with so much violence as to throw her down : then rushing past, he seized the first nun he met in the passage, and dragged her by force towards the great hall. The good sister Ambrosia flew to inform the prioress of what was passing ; on which, without a moment's hesitation, and only accompanied by her two faithful nuns, she hastened into the royal hall, where the king, surrounded by all the young nobility of his court, was banqueting with the abbess and Mde. Gabrielle.

Without stopping to salute the king, or trembling at the armed escort who lined the hall, the prioress peremptorily commanded her two companions instantly to seize and carry off the nun ; which being done, she turned to the astonished king, and with an intrepid eye and firm voice, thus addressed him : "Do you not blush, Sire, to be thus ungratefully profaning the temples of that God, whose arm has so signally

conducted you through unparalleled difficulties, and who only seated you upon the throne that your majesty might be the example of the court, and the guardian of the morals of your nation?" The whole assembly were for an instant silent with astonishment: then the king arose, and most respectfully reconducting the virtuous nun to the door of the enclosure, he immediately withdrew with all his riotous companions.

Meanwhile the prayers and the tears of the prioress were not lost: her conscientious obedience to the light she had, ascended as a memorial before God; and though many years intervened, yet when the M. Angélique and her nuns did arrive, they were hailed by Mde. de Cleri, and her faithful companions, as messengers from heaven. Thus, even in the degraded and iniquitous abbey of Maubuisson, though encompassed by vice without, and tried by darkness and ignorance within, we see that where two or three faithful though uninstructed servants of God were gathered together in the name of Christ, he condescended to be indeed in the midst of them, and did not fail to answer their prayer to deliver and to bless them.*

The reformation having been thus happily effected in this monastery, month after month passed away with every prospect of increasing peace and tranquillity. The old community of Maubuisson became daily more reconciled to the change; the novices increased in piety, abounding more and more in good works: and the M. Angélique and her companions, finding their labour become lighter every day, were beginning to promise themselves that they would soon reap an abundant harvest, when a totally unexpected event frustrated all their expectations.

* This excellent nun became, under the M. Angélique and the M. Suiresau des Anges, a most exemplary and devoted christian. She lived to a very advanced age; and when she was past eighty, although her sight was very much affected, she was to be seen every morning at matins, reading her homily by the light of four large wax tapers, which four novices held near her for that purpose. God, whom she had so faithfully served according to her degree of light, bestowed upon her the blessing of a most happy and edifying death. Her last illness continued eight days, during which she enjoyed great peace and increasing joy. Beginning to be in the agony of death, after the nuns had sung the creed at her request, she recounted the mercies of her life, how it had pleased God to answer her prayers, and lead her from darkness into his marvelous light. She then said, with extraordinary joy, "We must praise God: I much wish the *Te Deum* to be sung." Instantly the abbess (who never left her) ordered it to be done. As they were singing the very words "In thee, Lord, have I trusted, let me never be confounded," the good mother breathed her last, in a joy and peace which passes all understanding.

On Sept. 10th, 1619, Mde. d'Etrées, by the assistance of her brother-in-law, the Count de Sanzi, and a company of dissolute young men, his companions, contrived to escape from her imprisonment. She arrived at Maubuisson at six o'clock in the morning with a numerous escort, all strongly armed. The porter of the outer gate having refused them admittance, the Count and his party instantly burst it open; and after severely beating the servant and otherwise ill-using him, they proceeded with Mde. d'Etrées directly to the door of the church. There she found the M. de la Serre, who had formerly been associated with her in all her scandalous excesses, and with whom she had secretly kept up a constant correspondence. This wicked nun immediately opened for her the door of enclosure with a false key which she had contrived to obtain for the purpose. The first person Mde. d'Etrées happened to meet was the M. Angélique herself. She did not betray the least embarrassment or even surprise, at so totally unexpected a rencounter. Her calmness rather disconcerted Mde. d'Etrées, who said to her with considerable emotion, "You, Mde. de Port Royal, have for a sufficient length of time usurped the place which belongs only to me. Being now returned to my own house, you will see the necessity for your immediate departure." "Madame," replied the M. Angélique, with perfect calmness but with respect, "I am perfectly ready to quit this house, as soon as our common superiors allow me my dismissal." She then herself conducted her to the abbess's lodge; but instead of the sumptuous decorations with which it had been formerly adorned, she found it furnished in the plainest manner; and the most spacious and magnificent apartments having been converted into an infirmary, there happened to be two nuns in one of them who had been exceedingly ill and were then confined to their beds. Mde. d'Etrées could no longer contain her indignation; but turning from her former friends with an air of loathing and contempt, she disdainfully said to the M. Angélique who accompanied her, "I desire that these filthy and disgusting creatures may be instantly taken away; and that I may be no longer exposed to such an offensive sight!" "Madame," coolly replied the M. Angélique, "if this apartment is not in a proper condition to receive a lady abbess, I trust you will consider it an excusable circumstance, since the honour of your ladyship's company

was wholly unexpected." The abbess choosing to remain in her own apartment, the M. Angélique left her to arrange and lock up her papers; after which she went down herself into the kitchen, to order Mde. d'Etrées a proper dinner and suitable attendance. She gave directions to the nuns as to every particular, that Mde. d'Etrées might be served with the dignity belonging to her rank and office, and that everything might be done without trouble or confusion.

It was then service time. In honour of the abbess's return, high mass was solemnly chanted. When it was over, Mde. d'Etrées went all over the house, visiting every nun in particular, and endeavouring, by every persuasion in her power, to gain over those of the old community to join her party. With a very few she succeeded; but most of them would not even listen to her, being already sincerely attached to the M. Angélique. Having asked two of the nuns for the set of keys belonging to the house, they answered that they had delivered them up into the hands of Mde. de Port Royal. This title (which peculiarly belongs to the royal monasteries, of which Port Royal was not one) grievously offended the abbess, who indignantly exclaimed, "Madame! there is in this house no Madame but myself."

Dinner hour having arrived, a very handsome collation was served to Mde. d'Etrées in the abbess's apartment; whilst the M. Angélique went as usual into the refectory to dine with the nuns. Before she sat down to table, she briefly informed them of what was passing and exhorted them to be prepared to encounter some fatigue before the day was over.

After dinner, the monk who had so negligently filled the office of confessor under Mde. d'Etrées, sent to request an audience with the M. Angélique in the parlour. His object was, by gentle means to persuade her to withdraw. When these failed, he threatened the vengeance of the Count de Sanzi; after which Mde. d'Etrées concluded by saying that she hoped Mde. de Port Royal would take her departure quietly, rather than provoke them to resort to measures of violence, the bounds of which she might not be able to controul. The M. Angélique replied that, being a nun, she was bound by her vows of enclosure; and that therefore nothing short of the authority of her superiors or of foreign force, could compel her to quit the house where they had placed her.

Mde. d'Etrées seeing the day wear away, and that nothing was to be gained by discussion, resolved to expel her from the monastery by artifice or violence. She therefore assumed a cordial manner, and proposed that they should all go together to the church. The little band of the M. Angélique accompanied her, and having knelt down they recommended themselves to God under the strange circumstances in which they were placed. Then Mde. d'Etrées, spying her opportunity, whispered to the ancient nuns of Maubuisson to seize the M. Angélique and thrust her out by force through the door of enclosure ; but, as they did not choose to take any part in the business, she with her own hands endeavoured to drag her from the place where she was kneeling into the open part of the church ; at the same time screaming out for help, as though she had been herself attacked. At this concerted signal, Mde. de la Serre instantly opened the door with her false key. The Count and all his company rushed in with drawn swords, shouting and brandishing their glittering blades around the head of the abbess who, still kneeling, preserved a calm and placid countenance. The Count, enraged, put his pistol to her breast ; and one of his companions actually fired one in order to frighten her, and induce her in her panic to pass of her own accord through the open door. This indeed seemed her only escape, as they surrounded her in every other direction, and crowded in upon her with drawn weapons. But all these artifices leaving the abbess in the most perfect tranquillity, and her countenance not betraying the least emotion ; Mde. d'Etrées, the Count, the monk and the young men seized her by force, and thrust her out of the monastery.

Madame d'Etrées was very anxious to have turned her out alone, and to retain all the nuns ; but in this attempt she was foiled : for the whole company seeing their mother about to be thrust out, instantly rose from their knees, with several of the original community of Maubuisson, and rushed in a crowd after her towards the open door : so that although Mde. d'Etrées closed it as quickly as she possibly could, above thirty persons had made their escape and joined the M. Angélique.

Two of the M. Angélique's nuns did not go out with her, One of them, a postulant, chanced to be in the dairy, which was a very large one, and of which she had the superintendence. It was situated under ground, owing to which she

heard nothing of the scene of confusion and uproar above. In the evening, her work being done, she returned up stairs. Her amazement was indescribable at beholding herself in the midst of a company of strangers, and at seeing, as she anxiously looked round, nothing but faces wholly unknown to her. When the business was fully explained, she requested to quit the house; and on Mde. d'Etrées' peremptory refusal, she replied firmly, "Madame, you will have the goodness to recollect that I am not one of the former nuns of Maubuisson. I am not therefore your nun, nor are you my abbess. If I am detained after the departure of my abbess, it will be a false imprisonment, not a monastic enclosure. I advise you, Madame, to consider the consequences of such a detention: I demand an instant liberation." Mde. d'Etrées instantly opened the door to her.

The M. Angélique, finding herself thus unexpectedly destitute of house and home, collected the whole of her little company; and kneeling down in the open air, besought the Lord, whose cause had brought them there, to direct their steps and to provide for them. They then rose up, and the M. Angélique having arranged them two and two, as in a solemn procession, they began to walk slowly towards Pontoise. They entered the town in profound silence, with their great veils let down, their eyes cast upon the ground, and their hands joined in prayer.

The whole town was soon collected to witness so unusual a procession; and all were in admiration of the modesty, devotion, and holy tranquillity of their demeanour. The abbess conducted her daughters to the first church they met with, which happened to be that of the Jesuits. There the grand Vicar and Dr. Duval came to deliberate with her, on the steps proper to be taken under so unprecedented a conjuncture. The news quickly circulated throughout the whole neighbourhood. The Carmelites, Ursulines and almost every other religious establishment or private gentleman's house, offered an asylum to this peripatetic community. It was at length decided that they should take possession of the grand Vicariat; which was hospitably ceded to the M. Angélique until tranquillity should be again restored in the abbey of Maubuisson.

Before the nuns quitted the church, they said vespers

together ; after which they set out in procession as before, to take possession of their temporary abode. The people all stood with their hats off ; the crowds opened to let them pass, gazing on them in silence, and many kneeling out of respect ; and seeing the nuns walk with clasped hands, sympathetically united with them in prayer. On reaching the Grand Vicariat, they found the kindness of the inhabitants already occupied in anticipating every want. Beds, firewood, kitchen utensils, food, money, everything in short which could possibly be of any use to them, poured in with a profuse abundance on every side ; so that in the course of a few hours the community appeared completely established ; and the next day they were found proceeding with the same regularity and tranquillity as if nothing unusual had happened.

The abode of the M. Angélique however was not of long duration. The porter whom the Count de Sanzé had so cruelly beaten made the best of his way on foot to Paris ; where he immediately went to M. Arnauld's family, and gave them full information of the whole business. The general did not continue long unapprised of what had passed ; so that, a warrant having been obtained next morning, before evening the civil officers arrived at Maubuisson, with a company of 250 archers. Mde. d'Etrées, who suspected the consequences of her ill-advised measures, had taken the precaution of posting centinels on the various roads, to watch and give her intelligence if any of the civil power made their appearance. She was soon informed that an unusual cloud of dust and glittering of arms were seen through the trees on the road from Paris. Without waiting for further particulars, she fled in disguise through a concealed door, which she had taken the precaution to open on purpose, accompanied by the Count and his companions who had remained in the monastery ever since. As for the confessor, who by some accident did not receive the intelligence so early, he was obliged to climb up the high garden wall ; and, leaping down at the risk of his neck and taking to his heels, only just effected his escape in time. The whole party then fled to some of their friends, where they remained concealed for several weeks.

The M. de la Serre, who had been the chief instrument in this scandalous scene, was less fortunate. Not having time to escape, she concealed herself in a hiding place which,

during the civil war, had been very artfully contrived through the ceiling of one of the cells of the monastery. The access was entirely concealed by a tapestry hanging which fell over it; and even were it discovered, it could only be reached by a ladder. The cell through which this lurking hole was reached, was then in the possession of one of the refractory nuns.

The archers, having as they imagined searched the whole house without finding anything, after establishing a guard of a hundred men, went to Pontoise. Their commander waited on the *M. Angélique*, and very politely told her that his Majesty, anxious for the prosperity of so considerable an establishment as Maubuisson, was very desirous that she should immediately take again the government of that house. It was now ten o'clock at night; and, as no time was to be lost, she disposed herself immediately to set out. All the ecclesiastics of the town chose to shew them the respect of accompanying them as far as the gates of the monastery. They accordingly headed the procession, followed by the nuns walking two and two, between a double file of archers, mounted and carrying each a lighted flambeau. Meanwhile, almost every inhabitant of the town or neighbourhood hurried to behold the ceremony; and notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, night seemed almost converted into day, by the blaze of the hundreds of flambeaux and torches assembled on every side by the multitude of people who poured in from all quarters.

Thus did the nuns arrive at the abbey. The night was chiefly spent in watching, on the part of the archers; and in providing for their refreshment, on that of the nuns. Towards morning, the centinel, who was posted at the door of the empty dormitory, hearing some one moving softly, and as though treading with caution, gave information to the officers; when, after a long search, the hiding place of *Mde. de la Serre* was discovered. This lady, whose appearance and manners are described as rather resembling a trooper than a nun, at first not only refused to quit her lurking hole, but began to insult the archers in the most opprobrious terms; well knowing they could not place a ladder so as to climb up safely unless she chose to let it remain there. One of the archers seeing this, applied the muzzle of his firelock to the door, and threatened to fire instantly, unless she surrendered herself:

which she then did. She was then seized, and transferred to another convent.

The archers still remained six whole months in the neighbourhood of Maubuisson ; lest Mde. d'Etrées, whose retreat was unknown, should meditate a second enterprise. This precaution seemed not unnecessary, as the Count de Sanzé and his companions continually lurked about the premises, and either singly, or sometimes in small parties, both by night and day, not only insulted and ill-used the workmen and labourers who were employed there, but continually fired in at the windows, particularly those of the M. Angélique. The guard was, however, very painful to this excellent abbess. She did not like to see a religious house surrounded with an armed force ; often saying, "What can be expected from seculars, if religious persons, at least, do not shew that their confidence is in the Lord and in the power of his might ?"

On her reiterated representations, the archers were, at length, withdrawn. Very soon after, Mde. d'Etrées being discovered and shut up anew with the Filles Penitentes, all hostilities ceased ; and the M. Angélique was left in tranquillity to prosecute her work at Maubuisson. She stayed there five years.

The christian reader will be pleased to learn that, many years after, Mde. de la Serre became, by the example of the Port Royal nuns, a truly converted character. Her haughty spirit was humbled ; the fierceness of her nature was turned into the gentleness of the lamb ; and, after a dark and stormy day, her evening sun set with a bright and peaceful light ; and her name, though at the eleventh hour, was enrolled amongst the worthies of Port Royal.

As to Mde. d'Etrées, she sank from degradation to degradation, till she was at length transferred from the convent of St. Marie to the prisons of the Chatelet. The last certain intelligence we have concerning her, is that of a venerable christian, who went to pay her a charitable visit, in hopes of leading her to repentance. He found her stretched on a sorry mattress in a state of the most squalid misery and disorder, and drinking costly wines, in which, as well as in litigation, she spent the very handsome income which had been settled upon her from the revenues of Maubuisson at the solicitations of the Port Royal abbess. The kindly intended visit

of this pious man, she rejected with scorn. No more is certainly known of this unhappy woman ; but, about twenty years after, at the time of her death, the casket wherein she used to keep her papers, her jewels, and all her most precious and important effects, being brought to Maubuisson, the M. Suireau des Anges, then abbess, was equally astonished and touched to find all these things gone, and replaced by a New Testament and a Thomas à Kempis, neatly papered and marked in a variety of passages, as though they had been constantly read and meditated.

Such is a very abridged account of the difficulties the M. Angélique had to encounter at the monastery of Maubuisson. They are indeed slight in comparison with many she afterwards had to endure from the nuns of the monastery of Tard. It is however, sufficient to shew, not only that he who will serve the Lord, must prepare his soul for temptation ; but that to those who order their way aright, and trust in him, their reward shall not fail.

The words of exhortation which the M. Angélique addressed to her companions before leaving Port Royal, were however, as the event proved, a prophecy. They endured such extremity of hardships and persecution, and spared themselves so little, that one of her sisters, Marie Claire Arnauld, entirely ruined her constitution ; and though she survived her visit to Maubuisson nearly twenty eight years, she never enjoyed two days' health, till her spirit returned rejoicing to her Saviour. The trial of faith of one of her other companions was less prolonged. She was called to her reward almost immediately on her return to Port Royal.

In every one of the monasteries, however, a solid reform was at length effectually established. Both the nuns and abbesses considered their visitors from Port Royal, as angels descended from heaven. The M. Angélique became a blessing, not only to her own abbey, but to the whole of the Cistercian order.

CHAPTER III.

The Arnauld Family. Removal of the Monastery to Paris, St. Cyran and the Recluses. The Schools of Port Royal.

THE Mère Angélique had nine brothers and sisters who attained the age of maturity. Her six sisters all became nuns of Port Royal. Her brothers filled distinguished posts, in a manner most honourable to their reputation.

Her eldest brother, M. Arnauld d'Andilly, occupied the office of commissary general to the army. His duties obliged him to be almost constantly in attendance at court. The great integrity and fidelity for which he was distinguished, procured him universal respect; and his amiable disposition rendered him exceedingly beloved. The queen particularly honoured him with the highest esteem. But, above all, he was remarkable for his deep piety, so that, whilst yet in his early years, he was venerated even by courtiers as a saint.

Another of her brothers was M. Henry Arnauld, Bishop of Angers. This gentleman was esteemed one of the most pious prelates in France. He was, at an early age, sent as an envoy from the court of France, to that of Rome. His talents and piety were so highly esteemed there, that medals were struck in his honour, and a statue was erected to him by the noble house of Barbarini. When he became Bishop of Angers, he was so assiduous in performing his pastoral duties, that he never but once in his life quitted his diocese; and that was in hopes of converting the Prince of Tarentum, and of reconciling him with the Duke de la Trémouille, his father.

The city of Angers, in opposition to all his efforts, revolted in 1652. The Queen mother was advancing in order to take signal vengeance. The good bishop had been appointed to say mass before the royal army, a few miles from the entrance of the city. The queen, after the service, advanced to the

altar. "Madame" said he, giving her the consecrated host, "receive your God,—your God who, whilst expiring on the cross, pardoned his enemies!" The city was spared. These merciful maxims were not merely on his lips, but resided in his heart. It was said of him, that the infallible claim to the Bishop of Angers' good offices was to use him ill. He was truly the father of the poor and afflicted. His whole time was taken up in prayer, reading, and the affairs of the diocese. A friend, fearing that his health might be injured by incessant labour, requested him to set apart one day in every week for rest. "I have no objection," replied he, "provided you fix on one in which I am not bishop."

The other brother of the M. Angélique, was the great Arnauld, Doctor of the Sorbonne, who was afterwards so distinguished a champion of Jansenism. He was the last of Mde. Arnauld's children, and was twenty years younger than his brother M. d'Andilly. At a very early period he shewed marks of that energy and fire, by which he was subsequently so peculiarly characterized. When only six years old, he was staying with his relation, Cardinal Perron. One day after dinner, he was intently occupying himself with pen, ink, and paper, instead of amusing himself with his playfellows. The cardinal asked him what he was about? "Sir," returned the child, "I am assisting you to refute the Huguenots." Afterwards, when he was admitted as a member of Sorbonne, instead of the oath ordinarily tendered, he, with great energy, swore, not only to abide by the doctrines of the church, but to defend them to the last drop of his blood.

Whilst at Maubuisson, the M. Angélique had been introduced to the venerable St. Francis de Sales, and, by his means, to the Baroness de Chantal. With both of them she formed a close friendship. She introduced them both, likewise, to all the members of her own family. This acquaintance wrought a wonderful change in every individual belonging to it. The family of the Arnaulds were not only ancient, noble and affluent, but they had been noted, during many successive generations, for the great superiority of their talents. They now began to be as much celebrated for exalted piety, as for the lustre of their intellectual endowments. St. Francis went to his eternal reward when the youngest Arnauld was but a child. Nevertheless, the piety which his instructions

had first implanted, progressively increased throughout the whole family.

Such was the state of the Arnauld family when the Abbé de St. Cyran was first introduced to it. His acquaintance began with M. Arnauld d'Andilly. St. Cyran had just parted with his valued friend Jansenius. M. d'Andilly had lost a most revered spiritual guide in the blessed St. Francis. Under such circumstances, a close friendship was soon cemented between them.

Meanwhile the celebrity of Port Royal had occasioned a prodigious increase in the number of its inhabitants. Thirty nuns of Maubuisson had besought the M. Angélique to allow them to return with her, after her visit to their convent: besides which, a great many ladies from every part of France were continually applying for admittance. This rapid increase began to be a serious inconvenience. The abbey had been originally destined for only twelve nuns: it was now inhabited by eighty.

The waters of Port Royal, for want of being properly drained, had spread in one continued marsh over the whole vale. The vicinity of the wood increased the evil. The whole monastery was continually enveloped in a thick fog. The situation, from these causes necessarily damp and unhealthy, was rendered still more noxious by the want of proper accommodation for so large a family. The house at length became a complete infirmary. Deaths continually succeeded each other; yet numbers of fresh postulants were continually offering.

In this difficulty, Providence did not abandon the M. Angélique. A resource was offered by her own family. Her mother, Mde. Arnauld, was a lady of very considerable affluence. She had been the mother of twenty children, of whom ten had died in their youth; and the others were amply and honourably provided for. She was herself, at this period, left a widow, with a very considerable fortune at her own disposal.

There happened, at this very juncture, to be a noble house, with magnificent gardens, offered for sale at Paris. It was situated in the Faubourg St. Jacques, and was called the Hotel Clagny. This house Mde. Arnauld purchased at the expense of 24,000 livres, and presented to her daughter. It was soon prepared for the reception of the community. A

church was added to it by one of the first architects, and the interior was properly fitted up, at the expense of the Marchioness of Aumont. The Princesse de Guimenée and the Marchioness of Sablé, conjointly built the cloisters and the sacristy. They also contributed, with the Marchioness of Acquaviva, the celebrated Marchioness of Sevigné, Mde. le Maitre, and the Baroness of Guenegaud, in erecting many distinct piles of buildings in the courts, for ladies who boarded in the establishment, and for school-houses, infirmaries, storehouses and other offices.

The permission of the Archbishop of Paris having been obtained, the whole community was transferred to this new habitation, in the year 1625. A chaplain only was left at Port Royal, to supply the parish church, and to take care of the house.

Both these monasteries were considered as forming one abbey; but thenceforward they were distinguished by the appellations of "Port Royal de Paris," and "Port Royal des Champs."

The M. Angélique seeing her reformation so thoroughly effected, began to consider the best means of giving it solidity and permanence. She at length obtained a royal grant, declaring that the abbess, instead of being appointed for life by the king, should be elected triennially by the nuns. In 1630, the M. Angélique and the M. Agnés resigned their offices, and restored the monastery to a free election. They were, however, very frequently appointed abbesses afterwards.

Soon after the removal of the nuns to Paris, the M. Angélique was desired to assist the bishop of Langres in organizing a new institution he had lately founded in honour of the Eucharist. The bishop at that period entertained a high esteem for St. Cyran. On being sent for out of Paris, he appointed him director in his stead. By this means originated that friendship which ever after so closely united St. Cyran to Port Royal. In St. Cyran the M. Angélique seemed again to behold the blessed St. Francis de Sales. Till then she had mourned his loss as irreparable. She now for the first time met with one whose growth in piety was equally extraordinary. Nor could she avoid observing that to the eminent holiness which distinguished St. Francis, St. Cyran added a strength of mental powers, a luminous intellect and an energy

of character peculiarly his own. In these respects St. Cyran and the M. Angélique were especially congenial.

From their intimacy with St. Francis, the Arnauld family had rather received deep religious impressions than acquired clear religious views. Hence they had been more distinguished for warm devotional feelings, a respect for piety, and a horror of immorality, than for that distinct light which enables men at once to enter upon a religious course of life, and steadily to pursue it. Their intimacy with St. Cyran exactly supplied that which had before been wanting. He clearly pointed out to them the grand essentials of christian doctrine. From these emanated a clear light which distinctly shewed the path of christian practice. The pious impressions of this excellent family had already remained unquenched amidst the evil contagion of the world; what might not now be expected, when placed under the immediate influence of two such powerful characters as the M. Angélique and the Abbé de St. Cyran?

One of Mde. Arnauld's grandsons, M. le Maitre, had at a very early age obtained a high reputation for eloquence. He was esteemed at five and twenty the first advocate of the age: all France thronged to hear him plead. His brother, M. de Sericourt, had obtained much military reputation. They were scarcely thirty when they suddenly quitted the world and withdrew into profound retirement. Here they mourned with the most unfeigned sorrow over their past sins, and spent their whole time in devotion and in acts of charity. M. Claude Lancelot, and many other young men who were intimate with St. Cyran, became influenced in the same manner and joined their party. At the end of a few months they found their house at Paris too small to accommodate their numbers. They determined to go to Port Royal des Champs, and take possession of the monastery which the nuns had abandoned about thirteen years before. This occurred in 1638.

Here they found everything bearing the marks of the most complete desolation. The undrained lands were in many parts covered with water. The gardens were not only overgrown with weeds and brushwood, but the very walks were infested with venomous serpents. The house was in so ruinous a condition, that great part of it had actually fallen down. The recluses were not however to be deterred by trivial inconveniences. Many of them were young men of the first

families of France, yet they did not disdain to labour with their own hands. The little company joyfully set to work, and the aspect of the valley was soon transformed. The surface of the swampy morass now exhibited a clear lake, whose waters reflected the hills around, crowned with thick forests of oak. The tangled brushwood which choked up the avenues to the house was felled. The spacious gardens blossomed as the rose; and the walls of Port Royal arose from the ground amidst hymns of prayer and shouts of praise.

New associates were continually quitting the world and joining themselves to this little band. After a short period it became a numerous and flourishing society. Regular plans and an orderly distribution of employments were soon found necessary to the well being of the whole. These recluses, unlike the monks of a religious order, were not bound by any vows: each nevertheless sought to imitate his Lord, and follow his steps by a life of voluntary poverty, penance, and self-denial. They assumed no particular dress; yet they were easily distinguished by their coarse and plain but clean clothing. Their time was divided between their devotions to God and their services to men. They all met together several times, both in the day and night, in the church. Twice each day also the whole company assembled for meals. Some hours were occupied by each in their own cells, in meditation, in private prayer, and in diligently reading and comparing the holy scriptures, which they were accustomed to do in the attitude as well as in the spirit of prayer.

Their directors advised them always to begin by studying the holy scripture itself, without any commentary, only seeking for edification, and consulting the parallel passages, without which they conceived it could only be very imperfectly understood. They read the new testament oftener than the old, because they considered the former as the best explanation of the latter. "Draw continually" wrote their venerable counselor, "from this pure source. The sacred waters have this peculiarity, that they proportion and accommodate themselves to the wants of every one: a lamb may ford them without fear to quench his thirst; and an elephant may swim there without finding a bottom to their depths. A bishop of these latter times declared that he would go to the ends of the world with St. Augustin; but I would go there with the Bible. Oh that

I could but impress my heart with a fuller sense of the sacred respect with which that holy volume should ever be perused." But above all, the inhabitants of Port Royal were taught to search the scriptures with a supereminent view to him of whom they testify. "The true use of the written word is to lead us to the living Word which alone can invigorate and cure our souls; just as the steady contemplation of the brazen serpent could alone cure the wounds inflicted by the fiery serpents. The more we attach ourselves with singleness of eye to contemplate Christ upon the cross, and his wounds which are the cure of ours, the more benefit shall we receive from that divine power which flows from him to us, in order to bring us back to him who is alone our strength and our rest. Jesus Christ himself must be our light and our support. His sufferings are all our merits and plea; they are the source of all the mercies and graces we receive; it is by them only that we become living members of his body. Let us then establish the edifice of our salvation on the truth of Christ, and not upon the shifting and delusive sands of our own thoughts, fears, or frames. It is faith alone which inspires well grounded confidence. We trust, because Christ himself is our trust, who teaches us that our salvation is his glory, and that in saving us he saves the price of his death and the fruit of his sufferings. We are indeed by the natural creation of Adam nothing but sin, ingratitude and pride; and we see nothing in ourselves but subjects of guilt, condemnation and remorse. But that faith by a vital reception of which we are christians, and by which we are distinguished from the angels of darkness, after shewing us this ground of corruption and sin which ought profoundly to humble us, shews us with it the infinite mercy of God, founded upon the blood of Jesus Christ, as mediator and reconciler of men with God, who is thus become our trust and our cure. In this faith alone, according to St. Paul, consists the mystery of the christian religion. We must then unite these two views which ought never to be separated; the view of ourselves and our sins, and the view of Jesus Christ and his merits. The first terrifies; the second reassures. The first deeply humbles, the second elevates with what Augustine terms a holy presumption, the fruit not of pride but of faith. This confidence is firm because it is humble. It is founded indeed on the entire annihilation

of hope from man ; but on the mercy of God, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ, both of which are infinite.”*

Such were the sentiments of the inhabitants of Port Royal, and such were the sources whence they drew that plentitude of grace which so richly dwelt in their hearts, and which manifested itself in so abundant a diffusion of good works.

The remainder of their time was taken up in labours of love for their fellow creatures. Yet in these was the greatest regularity observed. They did not attempt to do each what was right in his own eyes ; but each filled up that occupation for which it was judged that his talents were best fitted. Every one of these recluses was under the direction of St. Cyran. Though he was all this time immured in the dungeon of Vincennes, he maintained a constant correspondence with his friend, M. Singlin. This ecclesiastic, under his immediate direction, guided both the houses of Port Royal. By this means St. Cyran was acquainted with the character of every individual in each of the houses. Every one of the recluses at Port Royal des Champs, as well as every nun in Port Royal de Paris, was placed in the exact office for which he or she was best qualified. Nor did their unfeigned humility ever permit them to murmur at any appointment, however low : each one rather esteemed it an honour to be employed in any way for his Lord.

The acts of mercy which occupied the recluses, were divided into two departments ; the internal concerns, which related to their own community, and the external ones, which regarded the public at large ; again, some of their occupations demanded intellectual, whilst others only required bodily labour. Such, however, was the mercy of God, that persons were abundantly supplied, suited to every necessity ; and so great was the humility of the recluses, that each, with thankfulness, accepted his own post. None considered the place his birth entitled him to, so much as in what mode he might best serve his brethren. Hence, some were employed in manual labour, some in assisting the poor, and others in study. They cultivated the farms and gardens ; they repaired the house, and supplied every article of clothing amongst themselves. There were carpenters, ploughmen, farmers, gardeners, glaziers, shoemakers, and vinedressers, whose accurate workmanship

* The quotations are selected from *Saci's Letters*, vol ii. pp. 677, 678.

appeared as though they had never practised anything else ; yet the thoughtfulness and devotion visible in their countenances, marked them as saints, and their manners betrayed them as natives of a court. Others contributed their talents to the good of the public. Several became acquainted with the law, in order to reconcile differences amongst their poorer neighbours. Four of the recluses who practised as physicians, were solely occupied in visiting the poor. Two of them became the most eminent practitioners of their age. Some supplied the pulpit, and ministered to the spiritual wants of their brethren. Considerable numbers were devoted to supply both the temporal and spiritual necessities of the peasantry around. Some carried them food ; others nursed them, and watched them, even in the most infectious complaints.

Meantime, the fame of Port Royal became more widely diffused. Many noblemen and gentlemen of fortune entreated the pious and learned recluses, to undertake the education of their children. Several persons of property, influenced by religious motives, gave up their parks and residences to be appropriated to school-houses and play-grounds. By this means, the Port Royal schools were furnished with every possible accommodation. Many of these little establishments were soon formed in various places. One was situated at Chesnai, another at Des Troues, a third was at Paris, and two of them at Port Royal. These little academies were organized by men of the first piety and learning. Persons of the most eminent abilities devoted themselves to the children's instruction. M. de Saci, Claude Lancelot, Nicole, and Fontaine, were amongst the numbers of the preceptors.

It would have been extraordinary had not the pupils of such masters been eminently distinguished. The plan of Tillemont's immense and laborious works was traced out and arranged at the early age of nineteen, whilst he was yet at the school of Chesnai. Some of the finest verses in Racine's tragedies were meditated, whilst a boy at school, in the woods of Port Royal.

Others of the recluses occupied themselves in study ; they composed works, which not only enlightened their own age, but to which ours is deeply indebted. Some of the best translations of the Fathers, and the most edifying accounts of the Saints, issued from the solitudes of Port Royal. The

controversial and theological works of Arnould, the *Thoughts and Letters of Pascal*, the moral *Essays of Nicole*, the deeply spiritual *Letters of Sacy*, were all composed in this seclusion. These works gained the esteem of the religious, whilst the grammars they had drawn up for the schools obtained, and still maintain, the universal suffrage of the learned.

Nor were the schools for girls, in connection with the monastery, less distinguished for the admirable education bestowed upon the children. It was equally luminous, judicious and religious. Never was there any asylum in which the comparative innocence and purity of childhood and early youth remained more completely unsullied by the contamination of the world; nor in which the education was better adapted to the various ages and talents of the pupils intrusted to their care. This institution, far unlike most schools under the care of monasteries, did not confine its care to the merely innocent habits which arise from not being exposed to the society of the vicious. The truths of christianity were solidly and luminously taught. The scriptures and the psalter were not only diligently studied and explained, both in french and latin, but they were read in the attitude of devotion: they were preceded by solemn prayer for divine assistance to understand and apply the weighty truths they revealed; and they were succeeded by a pause of meditation, and self-examination. The church liturgy was also taught and explained, both in latin and in french.

The lessons of piety, which the young ladies of Port Royal received, were still farther impressed upon their hearts, not only by the examples of those nuns who were appointed to be their instructors, but by the practice of a large and pious community, solely occupied in praising God, and in serving him in their neighbour. But the education of Port Royal did not merely confine itself to religious principles; it embraced every detail of religious practice; habits of not only acting, but feeling kindly and respectfully towards others; of being at once discreet and sincere; in short, the whole art of christian social duties and talents, founded on religious principles, was eminently taught in these excellent schools. Nor were the instructions of the nuns limited to a pious education; very great assiduity was used, in improving and strengthening the understanding, in giving habits of mental activity, and of

prompt voluntary exertion of the mind. The intellects of the pupils of Port Royal, were solidly and thoroughly cultivated ; and where they perceived the germ of peculiar talents, the education they received under the sisters of the Pascals, Arnaulds, &c. was indeed far different from that, which any public system of education ever elsewhere afforded to ladies. Even when this distinction was not perceived, the education of Port Royal was equally calculated to render them accomplished mistresses of distinguished families, or perfect and devoted nuns. The same spirit of devotion and piety was inculcated in either case.

It would be very easy to cite a prodigious number of young ladies educated in these monasteries, who have since edified the world, the court, or the cloister, by their wisdom, piety, and talent. It is well known with what sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and reverence, they always spoke of the education they received at Port Royal.

Nor will we close this subject, without observing, that although many treatises on education have appeared in modern times, and many which have been distinguished for the splendid talents of the writers, perhaps not many amongst them surpass in true wisdom, in a deep knowledge of the human heart, or reality of experience, the luminous "*Regle-mens des Enfants*," composed by the M. Agnès. Nor is it to be forgotten, that whilst the press teems with numberless theories, proposing plans of education, this little, but inestimable work, details a system which was tried, and that with unexampled success, for above sixty years ; and which, at the end of a hundred and fifty years, still entitles its author to the reverence due to transcendant piety, and the admiration due to supereminent talent.*

* See a detailed account of these schools in "*Port Royal, par Sainte-Beuve. Lièvre IV. Paris, 1848.*" Their establishment was due to St. Cyran, who had a most tender love for children, and who even in prison devoted himself to their welfare. His rule for teachers was "*to speak little, to bear much, and to pray still more.*" The Portroyalists were not less celebrated for their moral than for their intellectual instruction. They were the first to teach spelling by the sound, and to teach the art of reading in their native tongue, instead of in latin as was previously the custom. In this painful drudgery the three or four first years of the child's school life had been generally consumed. The aged Tillemont, in his last will requesting interment at Port Poyal, says "For the education I there received I bless God with all my heart ; and through his mercy I hope to bless him for it throughout eternity."—*Ed.*

CHAPTER IV.

Return of the nuns to the country monastery. Establishment of the recluses at Les Granges. Port Royal in its days of prosperity.

In the mean while the nuns of Port Royal de Paris had again greatly extended their numbers. They now exceeded one hundred and eighty. It became necessary once more to divide them. It was resolved to station a detachment of the community at their old habitation of Port Royal des Champs, while the rest remained at Paris.

As soon as the news of the nuns' intended return, after their twenty five years' absence, was spread at Port Royal, the whole neighbourhood evinced the greatest joy. The recluses used every exertion to prepare the house and gardens, and put them in the best order for their friends.

The M. Angélique was at that time abbess by election. She came herself to establish the nuns in their former habitation. On the day she was expected, all the poor flocked to the monastery in their best clothes. As soon as the long file of carriages appeared through the woods at the top of the hill, they all went to meet her. The bells were immediately rung; shouts of joy and exclamations of pleasure resounded on all sides. The procession stopped; then the poor with tears implored their good mother's benediction. She tenderly embraced them. At the church door she was met by all the recluses. They led the nuns into the choir, and after service left them in possession of the monastery. They then retired to Les Granges, a large farm house situated on the top of the hill, and belonging to the abbey. Here they continued all their former occupations; they conducted the farms and gardens, and performed every other laborious office; and here they pursued those studies, which have rendered the names of so many of them famous throughout the world.

The nuns superintended girls' schools, educated young women, fed and clothed the poor, instructed those of their own sex, and nursed the sick. They never saw the recluses except at church; even there a grate separated them; nor had they any intercourse, though so nearly related, but by letter. Nevertheless both the communities might be considered as forming one body, and both were under the same spiritual direction. They contained together eighteen members of the Arnauld family; and they were yet more closely united by grace than by ties of blood. They were perfectly joined together in one heart and mind, all saying the same thing, and all having the same views of love to God and love to man. In truth, no religious society throughout the whole extent of Catholic Christendom, had established a higher reputation than Port Royal, or was more eminent both for the sanctity and erudition of its members.

The very exterior of this institution announced the animating spirit of piety that reigned within. The gravity and liturgic simplicity and yet touching and chastened pathos with which the praises of God were sung, and the profound reverence and devotion with which the service was performed, touched the heart of every person who visited this seclusion. Even the minute details of divine service: the neatness, order and regularity of their choir; the solemn and imposing grandeur of architecture which characterized the church; and the perfect plainness which distinguished all the vestments and vessels used in the service, did not fail to impress the mind. The modesty, thoughtfulness and simplicity of the servants; the solitude of the parlours, which had formerly been the resort of worldly company; the discretion of the nuns, their polite and kind attention to those who had occasion to speak to them, and their total absence of curiosity respecting all that was transacted in the world, formed a theme of universal admiration and eulogium.

How much more was the monastery of Port Royal venerated by those who were intimately acquainted with its interior, and who continually found there new sources of edification! How deep was the peace, how holy the spirit of humility and retirement, how pure and spiritual the temperance and self-denial, and how fervent and zealous the spirit of charity which reigned within the walls of its enclosure! Here might be seen united

a rare example of industry, inspired by charity and continued without intermission or relaxation ; of prayer without any suspension ; of faith, bearing continual and abundant fruits. In this society ambition had no place ; nor was any contention found but as to who should fill up the most vile, the most laborious, the most humiliating offices. No impatience was to be discovered in the sisters, nor any caprice in the mothers : and it might be truly said that in this blessed community christian love burnt with a bright and steady flame ; alike rendering obedience prompt, command reasonable, and devotion to God all in all.

The complete and entire disinterestedness which so eminently characterized Port Royal, was probably one cause of the very strong attachment the nuns always felt for that house, and the honour they considered it to be received to profession. From the abbess to the lowest of the servants, it glowed as one spirit, with an open and munificent generosity. During the whole of the sixty years during which novices were received, even the voice of calumny never breathed that any tacit understanding was once entered into for the dowry of the nuns. They were retained on trial for two years ; and if at the end of that time their vocation was judged to be solidly grounded, they were received to profession. If the parents were not rich, no donation under any pretext was allowed : if they were, whatever they chose to offer was received as alms ; and a very considerable part of it was always reserved to distribute either amongst destitute families, or poor religious communities. In one instance they gave as a single present to a distressed monastery a sum of 20,000 francs which had just been left to their house ; and what rendered it remarkable was that at the very time the attorney was drawing out the deed of gift, the steward of Port Royal who was ignorant of the transaction came to consult him how to raise money on the rents not yet due, the house being at that time in the most urgent distress.

Never did the rank or obscurity, the wealth or poverty of a novice, enter into the calculation of the M. Angélique. Nothing delighted her more than when girls presented themselves in a state of the most destitute poverty : and when she saw them afraid lest they should be rejected on that account, ways used to encourage them, saying kindly, "Come in,

come in, my dear sisters ! Our house is not in want of wealth but of good nuns ; if you are such, you confer upon us by coming the greatest benefit we can receive." *

The rapid augmentation of the community, which consisted of about two hundred choir nuns, between three and four hundred pupils, besides lay sisters, novices, postulants, and ladies who boarded in the monastic precincts, made it necessary to erect several fresh buildings for their accommodation. In order to liquidate the heavy debts which had been incurred in these objects, a lady of very high rank and great wealth once made a donation to Port Royal of 80,000 livres. She soon after became a boarder in chambers at Port Royal, without at first entertaining any other desire than that of ending her days in the house without taking the vows. In process of time, however, she wished to take the veil. She was then admitted to the noviciate, during which time she passed through the same trials as all other novices. The two years being at length expired, she urged her reception to make her profession. The M. Angélique and her nuns clearly foresaw the serious difficulties to which they might be exposed if they refused her : nevertheless, as they were convinced in conscience that she had not a sufficient vocation, she was unanimously rejected. The lady quitted the convent in sore displeasure, and at once resolved to reclaim her donation. Had they allowed it to proceed to a trial, the nuns would have undoubtedly retained the whole : but they preferred touching her heart by a bright example, to maintaining their own indisputable rights. The abbess immediately sold some rents

* The M. Genevieve, first abbess by election of Port Royal, was one of these. She had felt a strong desire for a monastic life from her earliest years, but looked upon it as impossible in consequence of the reduced circumstances of her parents. Having heard however that the abbess of Port Royal was at Maubuisson, and was receiving girls for nothing, she presented herself for admission, and to her great joy was accepted. She was always remarkable for her modesty and gravity of deportment, for her deep humility, and for a sweetness of temper which endeared her to every one. Six years before her death, an accident not only deprived her of her eyesight but brought on interior pains of the most distressing kind. She bore her sufferings with the greatest patience, "looking daily more and more to the Lord, as she was no longer able to look to man." Some of the most touching letters of St. Cyran were addressed to her during this period from his prison at Vincennes. "The community being assembled when she expired" (writes the M. Angélique de St. Jean,) "while we were chanting the *Subvenite* according to custom, it seemed to us that other voices were mingled with our own and produced a supernatural harmony. It might have been only imagination, but we always believed that the angels were rejoicing at receiving this soul : and if there was error in our senses, there was at any rate truth in our hearts." A similar circumstance is said to have occurred at the death of the last Abbess of Port Royal—Ed.

at a heavy loss : they retrenched every expense that was not absolutely necessary, and borrowed some money at high interest, to raise this enormous sum. By great exertions and very great deprivations, they at last accomplished their object, and restored the money to the lady in the presence of two witnesses ; both of whom openly declared that they were as much charmed with the disinterested spirit of the abbess and nuns of Port Royal as they were disgusted by the mean, vindictive, and self-interested conduct of their pretended benefactress.

Two young ladies who were sisters, once presented themselves for admission at Port Royal. The eldest had a fortune of a thousand crowns left her by her grandmother ; the other had absolutely nothing. Both were well disposed young persons, and conducted themselves so well whilst postulants, as to be received into the noviciate. But on trial, the same vocation was not recognized in them both ; the one who had the thousand crowns was received to profession, and the one who had nothing was sent back ; but she received as a dowry the thousand crowns of her sister.

Whenever the M. Angélique found herself obliged to dismiss postulants, or novices for profession as lay sisters, (and who consequently belonged to a station in which they depended on their own labour) she never permitted them to quit the monastery, without presenting them with a sum of money, equivalent to what they might have earned at their business, during the time they remained on trial.

One day, a gentleman of rank being come on business to Port Royal, asked to speak to the Mère Angélique de St. Jean, who was at that time abbess. She, being engaged at that moment in giving particular orders, sent another nun to supply her place for a few moments. That gentleman began speaking of the monastery. In answer to his enquiries, the nun spoke, during the whole time, of nothing but her profound gratitude to that house for the very great charity and indulgence it had shewn in receiving her to profession. The gentleman to whom she spoke, concluded her to be some poor, indigent, friendless girl, received on charity, which he knew was very frequent at Port Royal. At this juncture, the abbess entering the parlour, the nun rose and retired.

• After having despatched the business on which he came, he did not fail to observe to the abbess, how highly edified he

had been at the lively gratitude of the good sister who had just left the parlour, for the charity that house had shewn her; and that it was a double subject of edification, to see the perfect disinterestedness of their house, in thus receiving poor girls gratuitously. The abbess was at first totally at a loss to comprehend what he meant, but afterwards recollecting the nun who had just gone, she told him with a smile "that the supposed *poor girl*, was the lady Madeleine Briquet; sole heiress of two very large fortunes; that in truth, she had brought to the house immense wealth; and that she was a lady as much distinguished for her solid understanding, her strength of character, and her literary and musical talents, as for her piety and humility.

The spirit of disinterestedness and generosity which animated Port Royal, from the establishment of the reform, to the very last hour of its existence, was amongst the blessed fruits of the M. Angélique, and was originally inspired by her example. She might eminently be said, to be wholly void of that covetousness which is idolatry. Her soul being fixed on God, the fluctuation of all created goods never shook the foundation of her peace. And the spirit of piety produced that tranquillity of mind, which the M. Angélique always manifested, under all the accidents which befel the temporal affairs of Port Royal.

One day, Le Petit Port Royal, a very large farm belonging to the monastery, took fire. This accident having occurred on Sunday morning, during mass, nobody was at home, except a little boy, who was left to take care of the house. The lad was so terrified and amazed at the flames and volumes of smoke, that he stood petrified, and gazing at the spreading conflagration, in all the stupor of fear; without once thinking of calling on the neighbours to lend their assistance. The consequence of this panic was, that the loss was very considerable. M. Arnauld was desired to inform his sister, the abbess, of so grievous a disaster; and to tell her with discretion, as it was feared so heavy a loss might greatly affect her. She, however, heard him with perfect tranquillity, and when he had done speaking, replied with a smile of satisfaction, "God be praised, that this is all! Come, brother, let us go, and immediately offer up our fervent thanks to God, that no lives are lost."

She discovered the same calmness on another occasion, when one night all their flocks were ravaged by a wolf. Of this accident, M. Arnauld was also commissioned to inform her. "I was going," said she in reply, "to send to the fair, to buy more sheep; but God, no doubt, finds we had too many, since he sent this wolf to destroy them. We must not, however, refuse ourselves some pleasure, to counterbalance this accident. Let all the wounded sheep be killed, and distributed among the peasants, that there may not be tomorrow, one poor peasant's house in all the villages around Port Royal, where the spit does not turn."

The same disinterested spirit pervaded every part of the conduct of the nuns at Port Royal. And though the absolutely necessary expenditure of this large establishment amounted, annually, to about 50,000 livres; and though their revenues, independently of the donations which were made them, only certainly amounted to 7,000, they never pursued any other conduct, nor did they ever fail in the performance of any one engagement. One of the most edifying proofs of the entire emancipation of the abbess from the cunning spirit of this world, was, the great care she took, even in the periods of the most urgent necessities and pressing wants, to conceal their poverty from those affluent and powerful friends, who were the most anxiously desirous to assist them. "My dear daughters," said this excellent abbess, "we have taken a vow of poverty; it is not being in truth poor, to expose our deprivations to generous friends, whom we know to be always ready to impart their wealth with rich abundance."

It was a maxim continually inculcated at Port Royal, that retirement and seclusion is not therefore necessarily religious seclusion. They were continually reminded, that persons quit the world for various motives; and that the dissipations and interests which beguile or distract the heart of worldly men, are perhaps as often renounced from disappointment, vexation, and inactivity, as from a genuine dedication of the heart to God: and that even those whose motives has been pure, in thus consecrating themselves by the vows of religion, should continually examine themselves, to see that they persevered in walking, not only in the perfect way, but wisely in the perfect way.

Accordingly, the monastery of Port Royal was equally dis-

tinguished for the munificence and zeal of its liberality and charity; for the superiority of the education, at once liberal and religious, which was given to its very numerous pupils, and which furnished France with so great a number of characters distinguished for piety and good conduct, alike in the world as in monastic seclusions. It was, too, scarcely less celebrated for the valuable religious and biographical works, published by many of its members. The works of the Mères Agnès, Angélique, Angélique de St. Jean, Mde. Madeleine de St. Christine Briquet, Mde. St. Eustoquie de Flescelles de Brégy, Mde. Jacqueline de St. Euphemie Pascal, Mde. de Ligny, and the Letters of Mde. du Valois, though but little known in this country, are, in wisdom, enlightened piety, good taste, and solidity of judgment, only to be surpassed by the bright examples afforded by the lives of their authors.

It is scarcely credible how many poor families, both in Paris and in the country, were relieved by the extensive charities of the two houses of Port Royal. For a very considerable time Port Royal des Champs had regular surgeons and physicians, on purpose to attend the poor. They were all persons of known piety. They visited all the villages round about, carrying with them medicine and the Testament, which latter some of them were in the habit of reading as they walked, in order to enable them at once to become useful physicians to the souls, as well as to the bodies of their patients. Nor did the nuns merely depute others to perform these acts of charity. They studied the chirurgical art themselves, and dressed the most loathsome wounds of the poor, with wonderful charity and dexterity.

Instead of all those frivolous works, in which the time of other nuns is generally occupied, and rendered subservient to the vanity or curiosity of persons in the world; it was equally astonishing and admirable to observe with how much industry, economy, and neatness, the nuns of Port Royal contrived to put together the least scraps, or bring the least remnants into use, and to make clothing for the multitudes of poor women and children who had nothing wherewith to cover themselves; and it was perfectly wonderful how, when in the midst of poverty, and unjustly stripped of their property by persecution, their indefatigable christian charity furnished them with a multitude of resources and ingenious

contrivances to assist others. God, who seeth in secret, knows how often their largesses have been poured out, with kind abundance, to the poor without their gates, when they have deprived themselves of their own bread, rather than deny others; and God, who *doth* see in secret, shall assuredly one day reward them openly.

In all these respects, the M. Angélique herself set the example to her nuns. She had a peculiar and admirable talent in nursing, consoling, and beneficially influencing the sick. She visited them, watched over them, and found time to render them the very meanest services, even with her own hands. Nor did she only assist them in slight illnesses; far unlike the lax morality of the present day, her truly divine zeal led her to visit those equally who laboured under the most contagious disorders. The most loathsome wounds, the most malignant fevers never deterred her from attendance; and she continually nursed persons suffering under their influence herself. It might be justly said of her, that death had lost its sting; and hence she was enabled to follow the injunction of inspiration; and as Christ had laid down his life for her, so was she willing to lay down her's for her sisters.

She made it a point, constantly to inquire into the state of the neighbourhood; not only bestowing ample charities amongst the poor, but taking, and placing out, and providing for their orphan children. Within the enclosure of the monastery, she erected a very large infirmary, where the poor women and children of the neighbourhood were nursed in sickness, and had medicines dispensed to them; or their wounds properly dressed, if they were surgical cases. The abbess often bled them with her own hands.

She had an office established in the convent, expressly for the purpose of clothing the poor, and another for that of their children. These clothes were spun, woven, cut out, and made up, by the industry of the nuns. If the children happened to come without their mothers, the abbess has often been seen herself to strip off their rags, wash them, and put on their new clothes. If, by any chance, the stores in the office were exhausted, she would take the linen of the monastery and have it made up for the poor; thus teaching the nuns to deprive themselves of it, rather than let the poor go without "It is one great end and duty of a monastic institution," sh

said, "to help the poor who have no other help ; if, therefore, we fail in that, we do not fulfil one great end of our vocation. She therefore had all her nuns instructed in the strictest economy ; she allowed nothing to be lost, but had the least remnants turned to account.

The charity of this eminent christian was so fervent, that when the house was in great straits she has been known to part with all the church-plate of both houses, even down to the very silver lamps and candlesticks ; nay, she has even taken the very napkins off the altar, to make clothes, or bind up the wounds of the poor ; thus shewing that she knew when to sacrifice the appendages of religious profession, to the immutable principles of religion itself.

The spirit of this excellent abbess pervaded her whole community. At the very period above mentioned, the great necessities of their own house being the subject of conversation, a sister of the M. Angélique, who was also a nun at Port Royal, was present, and having gone through her relation, terminated it by saying, with a countenance beaming with benevolence, "Well ! I do not think there is any one thing in the world, that can give one such lively pleasure, as to assist those who are in want. And yet perhaps after all there is, however, one still more elevated ; which is to have given away every thing, and to afford the same pleasure to children of God, by receiving what our good Lord chooses to send us by their hands."

The charity of Port Royal was, however, by no means bounded by the necessities of the lower classes of the community. She extended her inquiries to the families of tradesmen, whom she often rescued from destruction, by timely loans, and by placing their children in schools, or where they might learn trades ; nay, she privately informed herself concerning all the families of decayed gentry in the neighbourhood ; many of whom were assisted by sums of money, who were never able to trace the hand from whence they came. Several families she completely maintained, and had their children suitably educated, and provided for ; taking the daughters into the schools attached to the monastery.

Besides this munificent charity to secular persons, both the M. Angélique and the other abbesses of Port Royal, always appropriated a tenth both of their income, and of all the

donations they received, either to charitable institutions, or to distressed but pious religious communities. If it so happened that these rents or donations came at a moment of such pressing necessity that it was impossible to reserve them, it was entered as a debt in the accounts and paid as soon as possible. It was a very frequent observation of the M. Angélique, that a true christian will have before his eyes the danger of wealth, more than that of poverty, and the fear of superfluity more than that of necessity.

But the liberality with which the house of Port Royal distributed help to others, was no less remarkable than the munificent assistance which it received itself. The instances which are recorded in its annals of wholly unexpected and opportune donations at moments of distress, when their only refuge was in united prayer, are equally remarkable and edifying. Although the estates with which the monastery was endowed, only produced the annual rent of 7,000 livres, while the necessary expenses of the house amounted to nearly ten times that sum; yet the M. Angélique often said that she never had felt a moment's anxiety, and that she had not once entered into any necessary expense for her community, or engaged in any incumbent work of charity, but the Providence of God had in the issue sent her wherewith amply to defray it. She therefore went on giving, whilst she had a quarter of a crown in the house, when she was asked by the truly necessitous; not turning away from those who would borrow of her; nor distressing herself with anxious thoughts for the morrow, what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed; and the event abundantly fulfilled the word, that God knew they had need of all these things. They sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things were richly added unto them. Often, indeed, they suffered temporary want; but in the end, Providence poured in assistance with such ample abundance, that it appeared as though the Lord, whom they so disinterestedly served and so faithfully trusted, returned into the bosom of this holy house an hundred fold, for all the wealth they scattered with so munificent a generosity.

Exclusive of the presents continually sent them, of articles of supply, for the immediate consumption of the house, immense donations were from time to time made to the monastery.

Amongst others, M. Arnauld, father of the M. Angélique, who bore so prominent a part in the "wicket day," laid out immense sums, not only in repairing and re-establishing the ancient buildings of Port Royal; but, to shew his entire acquiescence in that seclusion he had so much opposed, he, at his own expense, encircled the whole monastic inclosure, with the strong stone wall by which it is now bounded.

The gift of the entire monastery of Port Royal de Paris by his widow and other ladies, has already been mentioned. Besides this assistance, very considerable accessions accrued to the property of Port Royal from the families of several of the nuns, or the donations of those ladies of independent fortune who took the veil there; as the Marchioness of Chazé, the Countesses de St. Ange, de Rubentel le Camus, the Lady Madeleine Briquet, her friend the Countess de Brégy, &c. &c. Madame de Bardeau alone gave 30,000 livres. The monastery also received frequent legacies from the recluses who died at Les Granges; M. le Maître de Sericourt, and M. de Sacy left to it their whole possessions. M. Benoise, counsellor of the parliament, and M. Briquet, Advocate-general of France, gave 1,000 crowns each; the Abbé de la Potheri, a rent upon salt of fifty crowns; and the Queen of Poland presented them with an agate ciborium, estimated at 4,000 crowns, besides many other presents equally rich and valuable.

The house of Port Royal des Champs, was by the generosity of friends completely repaired and fitted: or rather, it was entirely rebuilt, and enlarged to four times its former extent; under the direction, and chiefly at the expense of the Duke de Luynes, M. d'Andilly, the Marquis of Sévigné, and M. Gué de Bognols. The latter expended upon it 40,000 livres, besides a rent of 6,000 livres with which he endowed the monastery in perpetuity. The Duke de Liancourt, the Duchess his wife, and M. de Luzanci, each gave a donation of 10,000 livres, and the Marquis de St. Ange all his fortune: the Duke of Pontchateau also made very considerable donations. The Duke de Luynes built the mansion of Vaumurier, which he afterwards presented to Port Royal; and the Duke de Liancourt erected a large range of buildings in the court, for the reception of those guests, whose piety led them to renew their strength by a temporary seclusion amongst its inmates. A lady of great wealth afterwards built a noble house, and

laid out spacious gardens within the monastic inclosure, where she usually spent some months in the year.

Besides these pecuniary largesses, and a multitude without number of private alms continually bestowed by persons known and unknown, the domains of the monastery were very materially increased in value by the labours of the recluses. The farms were repaired, re-established, and ameliorated. The woods, gardens, and orchards, were assiduously cultivated and enlarged. The fruit of Port Royal, indeed, was celebrated for its extraordinary size and fine flavour; so much so, that when M. d'Andilly annually sent presents to the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, Cardinal Mazarin used to call it, "Blessed Fruit."

Such were the largesses bestowed by the friends of piety upon Port Royal. Truly might it be said, in this instance, that as they gave, so was it given to them, and with the same measure they meted to the distresses of others, so was it measured to them again; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, did men give into their bosoms.*

* As Port Royal received its impress from the M. Angelique, we here quote the summary of her character, as given by Besogne.

"She united a profound humanity to a sublime genius. Her capacious and comprehensive understanding, and rare sagacity, superseded the necessity of cultivated talents. She combined a noble generosity and lofty magnanimity, with an astonishing simplicity, and an undeviating integrity. Endued with grandeur and strength of soul above her sex; with an impregnable firmness, in the midst of the most pressing dangers, and the most harassing contradictions; she was eminently gifted with a fervor of faith, worthy of the apostolic times; with an ardent zeal for the good of her neighbour; a parental tenderness for her nuns; a sovereign contempt for all sublunary goods; and a magnificent liberality towards the poor. The rich assemblage of all these virtues joined to an almost supernatural and intuitive superiority of wisdom, formed the character of this incomparable woman, and truly admirable christian heroine."

CHAPTER V.

Port Royal during the Civil Wars.—Horrors of the Anti-christian practice of War.

IN this prodigious influx of wealth, although their establishment was enlarged, the nuns of Port Royal remained unchanged; their munificence was diffused more extensively without; but the same temperance and self-denial reigned within. Nay, all these great additions to the monastery proved a means of very considerably benefiting both the poor, and the whole neighbourhood. The M. Angélique considered the poor in the manner even of conducting the buildings. She suffered the work to be suspended, during the hay and corn harvest and the vintage, when employment was to be readily obtained in agriculture; but as soon as it began to decline from that source, and the poor were in want of work, she collected all hands to go on with the building. During the second war of Paris, generally termed the war of the Princes, she was advised to desist from these additions and improvements, till it should be over, as the materials were much increased in price; nor could they ever be brought without a considerable escort, and even then they were liable to pillage. But the M. Angélique was not to be deterred by such considerations; on the contrary, she determined to prosecute the buildings with redoubled vigour; that she might, with masons, escorts, watches, messengers, &c. have an opportunity of maintaining, by their own independent labour, double or treble the number of persons she would have employed in a time of peace. It is impossible to describe the blessing this proved to the whole neighbourhood. Not only a maintenance was by this means afforded to a very large number of country people, who were literally starving; but it was equally beneficial in preserving a multitude of men, women, and children, from falling into

those habits of idleness, vice, and pillage, to which they were tempted by the misery of the times.

The expense, indeed, of the buildings, was by these means rendered enormous. A gentleman riding through the valley of Port Royal, and looking at the vast piles which constituted the monastery, observed to a servant whom he accidentally met :—"These buildings, I understand, have cost double the sum they ought." "Sir," returned the man, "the price did not seem great to the nuns, since every stone was accompanied by the benedictions of the whole country."

Cardinal Richelieu died in 1642. The death of Louis XIII. almost immediately succeeded to that of his minister. Louis XIV. came to the throne in 1643. He was not quite five years old. His mother, Anne of Austria, was appointed sole regent. She nominated the Cardinal Mazarin prime minister. This choice was equally odious to the nobility and the people. The latter found themselves oppressed by grievous taxes ; the former beheld with indignation so large a share of power invested in a foreigner. A strong party was formed against him by the Duke de Beaufort, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and Cardinal de Retz. This powerful faction was headed by the Duchess de Longueville, sister to the great Condé. This lady was greatly celebrated for beauty, accomplishments, and above all, for political intrigue. She soon gained over her husband, and her brother, the Prince of Conti. They used every endeavour to render the royal party odious in the sight of the people. At length they succeeded in raising a revolt. The queen with the Prince and minister, were compelled to flee from Paris. Troops were raised on both sides. The Duchess de Longueville now assumed the authority of a queen. She concerted means of placing the capital in a situation to stand a regular siege.

This intrepid and enterprising Princess was not in the least dismayed, when she beheld the royal troops advance, and the capital, in which she commanded, blockaded on every side. Her brother, the great Prince of Condé, continued faithful to his allegiance. He led on the attack. The Princess of Longueville, neither mollified by the ties of blood, nor daunted by military fame, as resolutely maintained the defence. Her spirit of intrigue furnished resources against every exigency. At the solicitations of the rebels, Spain lent her assistance.

The archduke, governor of the Low Countries, was ready to pour into France 15,000 men. Gained over by the united influence of the wit and beauty of the Duchess, the great Turenne abandoned his duty. He took the field against his sovereign, and turned his arms against his native country. France was plunged into the horrors of a civil war. Violence, rapine, and desolation, spread over the whole country. Famine began to make its appearance. Misery and iniquity pervaded the land ; but above all, in the neighbourhood of the besieged capital, the sufferings were extreme.

Nor did religious houses escape the horrible ravages of a desolating war. Many of these seclusions were levelled to the ground. The abbey of St. Cyran was ransacked ; and Port Royal itself threatened with a similar visitation. In this emergency the recluses advised that the nuns should be immediately sent to Paris ; and that they should themselves take possession of the monastery, strengthening it by those fortifications, and assuming that military position, which might under present circumstances prove the most effectual mode of preventing an attack.

On this occasion one of the recluses writes as follows : "The day of St. Mark was chosen for the translation of the community. Though so many years have passed away, I seem still to see the procession of carriages driving from the door, and forming a long line down the avenue. I still remember the peace, silence, and good order, which marked this trying hour ; and seem yet to see the reverend M. Angélique presiding every where and superintending the most minute details ; yet with that expression of uninterrupted peace and love, which marked that even whilst she was diligent in business, she was yet more fervent in spirit. Scarcely had we watched the last carriage down the avenue, with fervent prayers for their preservation, than we immediately took possession of the abandoned monastery ; and after removing into it all our furniture, we began to examine how far it would be possible to fortify it so as to render its precincts impervious to attack.

"It was resolved to strengthen the walls, and to build a variety of small towers along them at intervals, which should serve as strong holds. Accordingly we all set to work, and in a very few days the whole aspect of the place was changed.

Some were occupied in digging the foundations, others were busied in hewing stone, or in handling the trowel. From a solitude of prayer and meditation, Port Royal seemed suddenly transformed into a scene of hurry and activity. Her forests echoed to the harsh grating of the saw, or reverberated the reiterated stroke of the woodman's axe. Nevertheless, though the occupation was changed, the same spirit still pervaded every heart. Amidst the despatch of business, a heart watching to prayer was written on every countenance. Surrounded externally by the horrid alarms of war, an internal peace reigned in the soul; and whilst the hands were diligent in earthly concerns, the frequently uplifted eye shewed that the conversation of every heart was indeed in heaven. And at the intervals of each stroke of the axe, the ear caught the songs of praise, with which the recluses beguiled their hours of labour. Often as I looked around, and as I contemplated my companions labouring in the midst of the forests which inclosed our seclusion, it brought to my mind the times of Esdras, when the people of God built the walls of Jerusalem with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other.

"In the mean time, however, the danger became more pressing, and even before the walls were completed, the peaceful inhabitants of our seclusion were sheathed in military armour. Instead of monastic solitude, Port Royal now exhibited 300 warriors armed cap-a-pie. Spears and helmets glittered amidst the dark recesses of her forests, and the din of arms was heard for the first time in a retreat so eminently consecrated to prayer. Yet was not the character of its inhabitants changed. The same devotion reigned in their hearts; and though the occupation of their working hours was altered, those devoted to the exercises of religion or of charity were never infringed on.

"Yet I must own, that the striking contrast between the genuine occupations of the disciples of the Prince of Peace and our present life was painful. Scarcely had the pealing anthem ceased, when the harsh blast of the trumpet called us to assemble in arms. The forest, which had never echoed but to orisons or hymns of praise, was now disturbed by the clash of arms and the trampling of horses' hoofs. The wood-rigeons, hares, squirrels, and other tribes of little animals, hich were almost tame, from the undisturbed peace in which

they lived, now started with fear at volleys of musquetry. I remember feeling particular pain, when, instead of closing our day with prayer, the deep thunders of the evening gun re-echoed from the distant mountains ; and as its blue smoke dissipated itself over the dark and shaggy forests, the awful grandeur of the scene, and perhaps some other secret emotion, used to fill my soul with deep melancholy. Oh blessed time, my heart said, when our strength was alone in the arm of the Lord, and when without trusting to an arm of flesh we securely rested under his shadow !

“Yet surely arms were never wielded by hands more pure. Whilst their armour glittered in the sun, the gold and silver with which they were adorned, concealed the hair-cloth and the penitential shirt beneath ; and the plumes which towered over their martial fronts, hid the tear of compunction which flowed down their cheeks. Whilst the two-edged falchion glittered from their side, the hands that wielded it were solely occupied in pouring balm into the wounds of their afflicted countrymen. The voices which called to arms were chiefly occupied in pouring forth the prayer of faith, or the thanksgivings of divine love, by the beds of the dying ; and the gaily caparisoned horses that seemed so eager for the field, were solely used in carrying food and raiment to the distressed. It was an awful sight to see in the midst of these uncultured solitudes this little troop at the moment the bell rung for prayer. In one instant every helmet was cast upon the ground, and with their heads uncovered, and their faces prostrate in the dust, hundreds of hands cased in steel were lifted in suppliant adoration. Thus under the external garb of war, these excellent men still served the Prince of Peace. Yet I confess I deplored the fatal necessity by which the servants of God assumed even the appearance of evil ; and often as we buckled on our arms, we could not restrain our tears and prayers to God, that he would be pleased to do away with this direful necessity.

“Meanwhile our venerable minister, M. de Saci, had not been consulted on the steps which had been taken. He said but little, nevertheless it was obvious that his heart mourned over us. However, he contented himself with being more than usual in retirement, and pouring out his heart in secret before God. Tranquil and thoughtful in the midst of alarms,

his very aspect said to our hearts that he trusted not in an arm of flesh, but in the power of the living God. And in the midst of 300 armed men, M. de Saci, unarmed, seemed a stronger defence to them than their entire force, if exerted, would have been to Port Royal. He united in an eminent degree prudence with faithfulness. His deep knowledge of the human heart, led him to see the danger of a departure, even in appearance, from the ways of God. Yet he still waited for the proper moment to speak, the moment at which their own experience should begin to corroborate the force of his words.

"Then, and not till then, he spoke. 'My dear friends,' he would say, 'examine yourselves; I will not say, prove yourselves whether ye be still in the faith, but try whether you increase with the same increase as formerly in the love and knowledge of God. The enemy of our souls, who is always going about seeking whom he may devour, is peculiarly active in these times of external disorder and danger, when the soul is in an especial manner likely to be thrown off its guard. Now do you find, that whilst you practice your exercises of earthly warfare, your heart is solely engaged in spiritual combats? Whilst you wield the arms of man, does your heart as fully and as singly as formerly depend on God alone for help? Now your minds are busy in contriving so many schemes of defence, are your hearts as completely resigned as formerly to whatever event it may please God to send? My dear friends, if we would obviate the effects of public disturbances, should we not do well to apply the remedy to their primary cause. Now surely the primary cause of public judgments can be no other than public sins. Whilst then we are endeavouring by force of arms to extirpate the branches, the baneful root still remains. Oh, my dear brethren, should we not be much more effectually serving our country by spreading the knowledge and love of the gospel, than by aiming at the defence of any particular spot, however consecrated? Amongst the multitudes who have taken up arms in this unhappy contest, how has the country been benefited? Believe me, we should be doing a greater service to our country, by setting an example of humbling ourselves before God, of confessing our sins, of walking in his precepts, of being resigned to his will, of trusting to his love, and there-

fore remaining at peace amidst all the horrors and alarms of war. Civil war is one of the most dreadful judgments of God upon a guilty land. How is it possible that your minds should be taken up with temporal interests, when you ought to be solely occupied in seeking a restoration to the divine favour? And how can it be, that in the midst of so awful a judgment, *that* should only furnish you with amusement, which ought to be the cause of the deepest humiliation? I know indeed, my brethren, what human laws allow in such cases, nay what the great law of nature, the desire of self-preservation, universally recognizes. But, my dear friends, we are in a peculiar manner under divine, and not human laws; we are under obedience, not to nature, but to grace. Remember, my dear brethren, the day you each consecrated yourselves to God. If you did not then resolve to follow the Captain of your salvation who was made perfect through sufferings, and if you did not intend to have fellowship with him in those sufferings, even to death, you are not worthy of him. Oh, my brethren, how little did I expect when I received your vows, to behold these very altars where you pronounced them, venerable by their antiquity, and by the successive generations of saints who have for centuries surrounded them, imbrued and defiled, for so they are, even by the mere semblance of blood and carnage. The horrors of war are ever dreadful to the christian mind; but surely *this* is as that abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, when that which is unclean shall even defile the holy places and the temple of the Most High.'

"Such were the sentiments of our reverend pastor. Nor did his children need to have them twice repeated. Though the judgment had erred, the heart had remained pure. Arms were banished from Port Royal. The nuns returned to their monastery. We resumed our former occupations, and Port Royal became as heretofore a house solely dedicated to prayer and praise."

Meanwhile the horrors of war raged all around with redoubled fury. Pillage and assassination desolated the country on every hand. Incendiaries and marauding parties laid waste the produce of the land, and famine and pestilence depopulated the cities. In this hour of exigency, the inhabitants of Port Royal proved the guardian angels of the land. This hospitable

seclusion became a safe asylum to the distressed. Their whole attention was turned to assist their unhappy country. Several hundred persons were every day supplied with food from the monastery. Multitudes of sick and wounded were attended by the religious. They visited every part of the district, to relieve the wants of the inhabitants, and to preach peace and concord. Their houses were crowded with persons who sought an asylum from the tempest. Many of their most bitter enemies were entertained at Fort Royal during all the time of the siege. The whole of the monastic inclosure was crowded with the effects which their poor neighbours brought as to a place of safety. The M. Angélique writes in the following terms to one of her friends:—

“We are all occupied with contriving soups and pottage for the poor. This is, indeed, an awful time. Our gentlemen, as they were taking their rounds yesterday, found two persons starved to death: and met with a young woman on the very point of killing her child, because she had no food to give it. All is pillaged around; corn fields are trampled over by the cavalry, in presence of the starving owners: despair has seized all whose confidence is not in God; no one will any longer plough or dig; there are no horses indeed left for the former; nor if there were, is there any person certain of reaping what he sows; all is stolen. Perhaps I shall not be able to send you a letter to-morrow, for all our horses and asses are dead with hunger. Oh how little do princes know the detailed horrors of war! All the provender of the beasts we were obliged to divide between ourselves and the starving poor. We concealed as many of the peasants and of their cattle as we could in our monastery, to save them from being murdered and losing all their substance. Our dormitory and the chapter-house were full of horses. We were almost stifled by being pent up with these beasts. But we could not resist the piercing lamentations of the starving and heart-broken poor. In the cellar were concealed forty cows. Our court-yards and out-houses are stuffed full of fowls, turkeys, ducks, geese, and *anans*. The church is piled up to the ceiling with corn, oats, beans and pease; and with caldrons, kettles, and other things belonging to the cottagers. Every time we enter the chapel, are obliged to scramble over sacks of flour, and all sorts of *gish*. The floor of the choir is completely covered with

the libraries of our gentlemen. Thirty or forty nuns from other convents, have fled here too for refuge. Our laundry is thronged by the aged, the blind, the maimed, the halt, and infants. The infirmary is full of sick and wounded. We have torn up all our rags and linen clothes to dress their sores. We have no more, and are now at our wits' ends. The cold is excessive, and all our fire-wood is consumed. We dare not go into the fields for any more, as they are full of marauding parties. We hear that the abbey of St. Cyran has been burnt and pillaged. Our own is threatened with an attack every day. The cold weather alone preserves us from pestilence. We are so closely crowded that deaths happen continually; God, however, is with us, and we are in peace." *

Such is war! How impossible does it appear that any christian should be engaged in it! How wonderful that the perpetrators of such horrors should be so deluded, as to imagine themselves amongst the children of the God of love!

Port Royal continued to be distinguished for its charity during the whole period of the war.

* During the wars a great multitude of artizans in the neighbouring towns and villages were obliged to quit their employments on account of the misery and danger of the times; and amongst others, those who manufactured the common serge, worn by the nuns of Port Royal. None therefore was to be obtained, but so ne pieces whose indifferent quality had been the cause of their remaining on hand from the preceding years, but which from the interruption of trade, was then offered for sale at double the price at which it was usually sold, although the quality was very inferior. M. Guais, a pious friend of Port Royal, who often made himself useful in transacting their purchases, had been asked to endeavour to procure some serge; but as he knew the monastery was at that time poor, and that money would be very ill laid out in buying so bad an article at more than double its value, he endeavoured to find out some substitute; and by accident, met with some *ras de Nord* much cheaper. He purchased one piece, and sent it to the Mere Angelique for her approval; not doubting but that she would be delighted at meeting with so beautiful, durable, and expensive a commodity, at a much lower price than a very inferior one. But the Mere Angelique immediately said, "I had much rather buy the common stuffs, at double the price, than suffer these fine ones to enter the community. I consider the money I shall pay, not in the light of a dear price paid for an article of dress, but as a cheap price, to keep vanity and finery out of a religious house, which has hitherto been preserved from it. Thus it is, that religious houses fall into relaxation by little and little. Few at once openly renounce strict and self-denying habits: but some opportunity presents itself, in which that which is a departure from religious simplicity, seems to be accompanied by a real, though accidental benefit; and then, what was adopted under the pretext of necessity, becomes established from vanity and luxury. Believe me, my sisters, things are not to be always estimated at the money they cost. That must ever be a dear purchase which is at the price of christian simplicity, because it is at the price of the soul. Christians must establish those regulations as to dress, furniture, &c. which they judge most suitable to those who acknowledge themselves guilty sinners, who feel they are but pilgrims here below, and who are disciples of a crucified Lord, who had not where to lay his head; and having established that rule, it is not one solitary instance of expediency, that should lead them to break it. Since, however, M. Guais has kindly bought us the stuff, take it; and let it be cut up for socks and stockings, where the beauty of the stuff will do no harm, because it will not be seen."

CHAPTER VI.

Causes of enmity against Port Royal.—Combination of the Court and Jesuits against it.—“Miracle of the Holy Thorn.”

A SOCIETY such as Port Royal, could not continue long without experiencing the truth of their divine Master's declaration, that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. In all ages, as in that of the primitive church, the introduction of the gospel is like bringing a sword on the earth, dividing between the good and the bad.

At the first institution of the reform at Port Royal, the M. Angélique had experienced some degree of opposition. Whilst the excellent of her order availed themselves of so bright an example, those who remained unconverted from the error of their ways, counted her life madness, and her undertaking to be without hope.

The recluses had not escaped a share of the same aspersions. M. le Maitre's conversion took place in 1638, just before the imprisonment of St. Cyran, and the death of Jansenius. They shared in a measure the persecution of their friends. Two months after the recluses first arrived at Port Royal, they had been compelled to flee from the researches of Cardinal Richelieu. They escaped to La Ferté Milon, where they lived concealed for some months. After the storm was blown over, they again returned to Port Royal.

Many causes conspired to render the Jesuits inimical to this institution. These may perhaps be referred to three general heads: their enmity to the abbot of St. Cyran, the friend and successor of Jansenius; their jealousy of the growing celebrity of a society, which already eclipsed their own in literary fame and in academical institutions, and which threatened to do so in spiritual direction. Thirdly, they were actuated by a determined animosity against the family of Arnould.

St. Cyran was charged with having inculcated, that a mere abstinence from outward sin from the dread of divine vengeance was by no means a proof of genuine conversion. A deep sorrow for sin arising from a genuine love of God, and a heartfelt grief for having offended him, were, he insisted, indispensably necessary to a truly evangelical repentance. This according to the Jesuits was a heresy of the first magnitude. The writings of several of their doctors had demonstrated the love of God to be superfluous. Cardinal Richelieu, when bishop of Luçon, had written a catechism for the use of his diocese which maintained this doctrine. Father Seguenot too, of the Oratoire, had recently been imprisoned in the Bastille, for asserting the love of God to be indispensably essential.

Nor was this the only heresy alleged against St. Cyran. He was accused of having asserted that the priest cannot in fact absolve from sin. He was said to have declared, that absolution and remission of sins belong to God alone. He indeed allowed that a competent discernment of spirits was a grace conferred by the sacrament of ordination. He believed, therefore, that where the priest was truly faithful to the grace imparted, he might (where an evangelical repentance and faith were evidenced by corresponding fruits) pronounce an absolution truly declaratory of the will of God. Otherwise and of itself, he believed it could not avail an impenitent sinner, to procure absolution from an unconscientious priest. This heresy was esteemed of equal magnitude with the preceding.

But the enmity which the Jesuits exhibited against St. Cyran, was by no means attributed wholly to theological doctrines. Many ascribed a great part, if not the whole of their apparent religious zeal, to literary jealousy and to personal pique. The religious writers amongst the Jesuits had long been esteemed as bearing a decided pre-eminence. Several works had, however, lately appeared, which divided the public opinion. Although anonymous, they were soon traced to Port Royal. Others succeeded, equally distinguished for profound erudition, fervent piety, and attic elegance of style. A great sensation was produced on the mind of the public. "They bear the stamp of Port Royal," became the fashionable phrase of literary or religious commendation. Nor

was their eulogy confined to empty popular applause. It was soon observed, that the diffusion of these publications was attended with corresponding fruits. Men began every where to turn to God. Many of the most blasphemous, rapacious, and voluptuous, become holy, just and temperate. Several, whose lives had long been a public scandal, became eminent examples of devoted piety. It was remarked, that whilst the works of the Jesuits were clothed with wisdom, those of the Port Royalists seemed accompanied by divine power. The perusal of the former furnished matter for conversation ; that of the latter terminated frequently in deep compunction and solid conversion.

The Port Royalists arose indeed at a period unfortunate for the Jesuits. The main object of this society was to extend the power of the Romish see. It was founded by Ignatius de Loyola, just at the very time when Luther began his Reform. Whilst one of these great men, beholding the deep corruptions of the church, endeavoured to shake the papal domination to its very foundation ; the other, who had in the same church first tasted the goodness of God, was laying the foundations of a society whose chief object was to strengthen its power and extend its influence. The company founded by Ignatius had, in the space of a century, sensibly degenerated in piety. Their object was still the same ; but the means they took to accomplish it were not so pure. Their learning and their talents had obtained for them a high rank in public esteem, which the regularity of their lives enabled them to preserve. They chiefly sought power by the education of youth in their numerous seminaries, and by a very extensive spiritual direction. They especially coveted to guide the consciences of men in high station. In this aim, their success was proportioned to their assiduity. There were very few princes on the throne, nobles in the realm, dignitaries in the church, or religious houses belonging to any order, who were not either directly or remotely under their influence. Amidst so considerable a multitude of the great and powerful, there were many who, whilst they wished not to lose heaven, were yet resolved to continue in sin. Their ghostly fathers were hence reduced to the alternative either of wholly breaking with them, or of finding out some accommodating system of morality, by which they might at once retain their influence,

and yet in a measure save appearances, as it respected their own spiritual reputation. Such was the origin of that famous system of casuistic divinity, which was afterwards so fully exposed, and so ably refuted in Pascal's inimitable *Lettres Provinciales*. Almost all the best writers amongst the Jesuits were at this time engaged in defending this system. But it was perceived that their works were rather distinguished for elaborate sophistry, than for solid and valuable truths. Nay, in some of them it was but too obvious, that the main object of the writer was to sanction immorality, and to disarm even natural conscience of its sting. The disciples of St. Augustin exposed these fallacies. The society of Jesuits had been sufficiently distinguished for men both of exalted piety and profound learning: the whole body however thought themselves involved by the just censure of a few unworthy individuals.

Another cause greatly contributed to incense the Jesuits against the followers of St. Cyran. The seminaries of the Jesuits had long enjoyed a deserved celebrity. On them hitherto had almost exclusively devolved the education of the higher classes. They felt considerable mortification at seeing themselves rivaled, if not far excelled by the recent establishments of Port Royal. With so many grounds of dislike, it is scarcely to be wondered at, that the Jesuits felt piqued; and that they were little disposed to think well of their rivals. Even a truly pious individual would find a large portion of grace necessary to preserve Christian love under such circumstances. A body of men may profess orthodox principles, but it can never be expected that the majority should be actuated by unmixed evangelical tempers. A few deeply religious individuals may be found in perhaps all professing societies; but even as it respects them, the temptation will be found strong, where party spirit solicits under the disguise of unfeigned love of our *own* brethren. Hence even the best men may be expected to act more consistently when they act singly, than collectively.

The Jesuits exerted every effort first to get the work of Jansenius suppressed, and afterwards to quash the little company of his disciples. The friends of M. de St. Cyran had, with his virtues, imbibed his peculiar opinions. Whilst they steadily maintained the grand principles of the gospel, they

were also strenuous advocates for the doctrine of grace. They published in defence of the work of Jansenius. The Jesuits as vehemently renewed the attack : and at length they determined finally to crush a system, which has always had some of the most pious persons on its side ; and which, in this instance, had the most learned and the most spiritual body of men then extant, among its professors.

The Jesuits had for some time borne a grudge against the Arnauld family. The grandfather of the M. Angélique had been the most eminent advocate of his day. He had been employed by the university of Paris, in an important cause against the Jesuits, and had gained his suit. But there was a more recent cause of opposition. The strict morality and ascetic habits of the Jansenists, had been long interpreted as a silent reflection on the lax principles of the casuists. A publication of Dr. Arnauld's aggravated their displeasure. He wrote a work on Frequent Communion, deploring the levity with which too many persons approach that sacred mystery. He spoke of the necessity of producing genuine fruits of repentance, before the seed of a living faith can be implanted. He urged the needfulness of a real cessation from sin, and a heart-felt desire to relinquish evil, previous to absolution. He concluded by observing, that no repentance could be termed evangelical, whilst it arose solely from a fear of punishment, unmixed with a true love of God. The whole work was supported by ample quotations from the Scriptures and the Fathers of the church.

A treatise, the very object of which was to tear away every refuge of lies, could not but create considerable alarm among the Jesuits. Should Dr. Arnauld succeed in establishing the doctrine of penitence, they could only have a choice of two evils. Either their reputation for piety would sink for not requiring it ; then their direction would not be sought ; or else, if they did exact rigorous penance, they well knew that the bulk of their flock would instantly quit them for milder pastors.

In this difficulty, nothing remained but to brand Dr. Arnauld and his work with heresy. The extensive direction of the Jesuits gave them a very wide influence, especially over the consciences of the great. It began to be every where rumoured, and especially at court, that a new heresy was sprung up ;

and that unless Port Royal were extirpated, the most heavy judgments, and the most signal strokes of divine vengeance, would speedily overwhelm the land. The Sorbonne, and all the Gallican clergy, were appealed to by the Jesuits. Rome itself was applied to, respecting M. Arnauld's work. Our Lord has declared, that the world will love its own. A decision was accordingly given, such as might have been expected. The Jansenists were condemned.

A certain Father Cornet, a Jesuit, had produced five propositions which he professed to have extracted from the work of Jansenius. These propositions were worded with the most artful ambiguity. The phrases were so contrived, as to be capable of two constructions, widely differing from each other. Taken in one point of view, the terms employed had a considerable resemblance to some used by Jansenius. On the other hand, they were affixed to such different ideas, and applied so differently, that the meaning obviously conveyed was, in some instances, absolutely opposite to his. This paper, so carefully worded, and maliciously constructed, was laid before the Sorbonne, and before the apostolic see, as containing dangerous, false and heretical doctrine. It underwent a long and animated discussion. At length, the desired verdict was obtained. It was pronounced heretical, first by the Sorbonne, in February 1656, and afterwards by a bulle of Innocent X. A general assembly of the French clergy was summoned. Almost all the dignitaries of the Gallican church attended. With a very few exceptions, they united in the proscription of the new heresy. The Jesuits had now gained their point. It was proposed and determined to draw up a formula, recapitulating the five propositions, and subjoining to them a declaration that they were heretical. A decree was then issued, commanding the formulary to be signed by all who instructed children, and by all who pretended to benefices or orders.

The Jesuits had long termed the little schools of Port Royal the seminaries of Jansenism and hot-bed of heresy. They now obtained an order from government to abolish them. The officers of the police, accompanied by a troop of archers, were sent to Port Royal des Champs, where they made a list of the schools. They then proceeded to each, and immediately turned out all the masters and boys, and sent all the recluses

from their retirement at Port Royal des Champs on pain of imprisonment.

Immediately after, an order of Council was signed against the nuns. It was resolved, that every scholar, postulant and novice, should be turned out of both the houses of Port Royal. This decree had been given : it was on the point of being carried into execution, when, by a most extraordinary event, a stop was put to the whole persecution. That its truth was equally believed by the friends, and allowed by the enemies of Port Royal, is undoubted ; and it was unquestionably this belief which arrested the course of the secular power. It disarmed the vengeance of a powerful and despotic monarch ; it stayed the thunders of the Vatican ; and it turned the tide of opinion of a whole nation.* It is so numerously attested by eye-witnesses of unsuspected piety and distinguished intelligence, that no person who admits the possibility of miraculous occurrences can doubt it. On the other hand, it is so extraordinary, and so opposite to the operations of nature, that no one who disbelieves in occasional supernatural interpositions, will be able to admit it.

The event alluded to was a miraculous cure, said to be operated on the niece of the great Pascal. He had some years previously made a decidedly religious profession, but his health having suffered from severe mental exertion, his medical friends advised relaxation ; this was the unfortunate occasion of his total relapse into the world. The cure of his niece put the final stroke to his vacillations. He became truly converted. He was deeply impressed by the circumstance, and wore ever after a seal, the device of which was a crown of thorns, from which emanated rays of light : underneath was this motto.—*Scio cui credidi.*—"I know in whom I have believed. He conceived the intention of writing a work on miracles, which he accordingly began ; but his death interrupted the design. The memoranda he had made were collected by his friends, and published by the well known name of "*Pensées de Pascal,*" or *Pascal's Thoughts.*

* The reader who may be curious to examine the various authorities and evidence on which this circumstance rests, is referred to Besogne, Clemenœt, Gilbert, Perrier, Pascal, Necrologe, Manuel de Port Royal ; also Histoire du Miracle de la sainte Epine, voyez le 3me tome des Memoires de Fontaine, Notes de Nicole au 4me tome des Lettres Provinciales ; Racine, Histoire abrégée de Port Royal ; Choiseul, Memoires sur la Religion. Attestations des Grands Vicaires de Paris sur le Miracle de la Sainte Epine.

The following is the account of the cure of Pascal's niece, from Dom. Clemencet's History of Port Royal: vol. iii. pp. 367—393.

"Marguerite Perrier, daughter of M. Perrier, counselor in the Court of Aides, of Clermont, and of Gilberte Pascal, sister of the celebrated M. Blaise Pascal, was placed at Port Royal with her eldest sister in 1653, by their mother; who made it her earnest endeavour to give her children a christian education. God, who was pleased to manifest his works and his power in the person of his child, suffered her to be afflicted during three years and a half with a fistula lachrymalis, in the corner of her left eye. This fistula, which was very large externally, had made great ravages within. The bones of the nose were become carious, and perforated to the palate; so that the discharge, which was continual, ran down her cheeks and nostrils, and sometimes into the throat. Her eye was considerably diminished, and the parts around so diseased, that to touch her head on that side caused great pain. It was impossible to look at her without shuddering; and the discharge which ran from the ulcer was so intolerably offensive, that the surgeons recommended her being separated from the other boarders in the convent; she was accordingly placed in a separate chamber with one of her companions much older than herself, who from motives of duty undertook to remain with her. All the most famous oculists, surgeons, and operators, were consulted; but their remedies only served to irritate the disorder. Fearing that the ulcer would extend itself over the face, three of the most able surgeons of Paris, MM. Cressé, Gulliard, and Dalencé, advised the actual cautery; without at the same time, however, affording much hope of a cure. In a word, she was now in so deplorable a state, that whenever she was spoken of before Madame d'Aumont, she wished for her death, to end her sufferings; and whenever miracles were mentioned, she said, that if this disorder were to be cured, it would be indeed a miracle. The opinion of the surgeons was sent to M. Perrier, who immediately set out to be present at the operation, and was daily expected.

"It was at this period that the storm was ready to burst on Port Royal. Certain intelligence was received that a council was to be held before the king, to determine on the dispersion of the nuns. The news was received on Monday the 20th

of March, the third week in lent ; and it was added, that the list of their names, and of the places of their exile, had been seen on the queen's toilette. Intelligence so circumstantial, of which no doubt could be entertained, having filled Port Royal with apprehension, the Mère des Anges, (aunt to the celebrated Nicole,) who was then abbess, felt severely the meditated blow ; and resorted to prayer to avert the anger of God. 'My daughter,' (said she to Sœur Candide) 'we must leave every thing, to devote ourselves to turn away the displeasure of God ; for if God has not mercy on us, the house is lost ; the council is to be held to determine on our dispersion, and that is certain. We must avert this evil, by imploring day and night the mercy of God. I am going to be three days and three nights in constant prayer ; I shall spend these days in the tribune before the holy sacrament. I warn you of it, that you may not be uneasy, or suffer me to be interrupted.' She began on the Tuesday to devote herself to prayer ; from which she only desisted to take her meals, and resumed immediately, after which she continued till nine at night, when Sœur Candide prevailed on her to go to rest, but she had hardly been in bed when she again rose, and passed a part of the night in prayer.

"On the morrow Mlle. Tardieu called at Port Royal, and told Sœur Magdeleine des Anges de Druy, that M. de la Poterie (an ecclesiastic of fortune and piety, who had with great pains made a collection of holy relics,) had a holy thorn, which he had exhibited to all the communities in the district, and that if she approved, she would bring it to her the next day. The Sœur Magdeleine having repeated to the Mère des Anges what Mlle. Tardieu had said, she desired her to thank Mlle. Tardieu, and M. de la Poterie, adding that the house was not in a situation to permit them to have the consolation of seeing that holy relic ; that they could only think of prayer and supplication before God. Sœur Magdeleine des Anges was rather mortified, and made no reply ; but went to the Mère Agnès, who answered, that since the abbess had not thought it proper, it must not be done ; that it was true they were not in circumstances to admit of gratification ; whereon Sœur Magdeleine replied, that if it was brought to be exposed on the Friday, at the prayer of the passion, it would occasion no distraction. The Mère Agnès having approved of the proposal,

told her to speak to the abbess, who consented, telling her that it should only be carried during that hour, and that no one should regard it from curiosity. The Sœur Magdeleine wrote immediately to M. de la Poterie, to request him to send the holy relic: it was brought on the 24th of March, 1656, which fell that year on Friday, the third week in lent; a day on which the church sings, at the introduction of the mass, these words of the 86th psalm: 'Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.'

"For three days the Mère des Anges had remained in a kind of retreat; where she continued night and day to lift her hands to heaven, no hope being left of help from men. But it was the moment when the interference of heaven was to be shewn for her and her community. The nuns, having received the thorn, placed it on a little altar in the choir, and the community had notice to attend a procession to be made after vespers in honour of it. Vespers being finished, hymns were sung and prayers made suited to the crown of thorns and the mysteries of the sacred passion. After which, they each, according to their rank, kissed the sacred relic, first the nuns, then the novices, afterwards the boarders. When it came to the turn of the little Perrier, Sœur Flavie Passart, mistress of the novices, who had placed herself near the grille to see these children pass, having perceived her, could not see her so disfigured without horror mingled with compassion; and said to her, 'Recommend yourself to God, my child, and touch your bad eye with the holy thorn,' and she herself, says the Sœur Euphémie Pascal, took the holy relic, and applied it without reflection; having all retired, they returned it to M. de la Poterie.

"In the evening, the Sœur Flavie, who thought no more of what she had done, heard little Perrier say to one of her little sisters: 'My sister, I have no longer any thing the matter with me: the holy thorn has cured me;' in fact, the Sœur Flavie, on going near, found her left eye, that which had been diseased, quite well, and not in the least differing from the other; although it had been in a state that was painful to behold. The cure was so perfect, that the Sœur Euphémie, her aunt, speaking of the disorder and of the cure, says in her letter, that it would now require a much larger measure of faith, in

those who have not seen it, to believe she ever had the disease ; than in those who had seen it, to believe she had been cured in a moment, by a miracle as great and as visible as restoring sight to the blind. The Sœur Euphémie adds, that in addition to her eye, she had several other ailments connected with it ; she was unable to sleep ; she had two places in her head where she could not bear the comb ; it was only two days since, that looking at her disorder brought tears in her eyes, and the smell was very offensive. At present there are no more remains of it than if it had never existed. This miracle took place at three o'clock in the afternoon, as related by the Sœur Euphémie ; the hour when Jesus Christ, at his death, bestowed a miraculous power on the instruments of his passion. It may be readily imagined, what publicity would have been given to such an astonishing event, had it taken place in any other convent than Port Royal, and what pains would have been taken to inform the whole community ; nevertheless, because it was the hour of silence, and that hour was more strictly observed during lent than at any other time, and because the house was then in a deeper state of devotional meditation than in general, these two young girls retired to their chamber and went to bed, without saying a word of what had happened. The only person to whom it was known, was the Sœur Flavie ; who told it solely to the abbess, from whom the Sœur Euphémie Pascal, the aunt of the child who had been cured, learnt it on the following day. On that day, one of the nuns employed about the boarders, came to comb the little Perrier ; and being fearful of hurting her, she very carefully touched the left side of her head ; but the child told her, 'My sister, the holy thorn has cured me !' 'How, my sister, are you cured ?' 'Look and see,' she replied. In fact the nun examined, and saw that she was entirely cured. She went to inform the abbess, who came and gave thanks to God for this wonderful manifestation of his power. But she did not think it prudent to make it publicly known, persuaded that, under the present unfavourable disposition of society towards their house, they should above all things avoid being made the subject of conversation in the world.

"Notwithstanding the reserve of the nuns, the miracle could not remain concealed ; and God who had wrought it, to justify the innocence and purity of faith of these christian

virgins who were decried, soon rendered it public. M. Dalencé, who had seen the child Perrier under the disease, came to Port Royal on the 11th of March, six or seven days after she was cured; she was brought to him without saying a word. He began to examine her minutely, he pressed her eye, passed a probe into the nose, and was very much astonished to find nothing of the complaint. He was asked if he did not remember the disorder he had seen; he answered very simply, "It is what I am seeking, but I can no longer find it." Sœur Euphémie Pascal begged him to examine her mouth, which he did, and introduced his probe, and found so little amiss, that he began to laugh, and said, "Here is nothing at all the matter;" on which Sœur Flavie related to him every thing that had passed. He made her repeat it more than once, for he was a remarkably cautious, prudent man, and after having listened patiently and attentively, he asked if it went away immediately; and the child having answered that it did, he said he would, whenever called on, give his attestation, that it was impossible to have taken place but by a miracle.*

* The following is Fontaine's circumstantial account of the visit of the surgeons, accompanied by M. Perrier, with the intention of performing the cautery. "They entered sorrowfully into the young lady's chamber, and prepared all the necessary instruments for the operation, which wounded the heart of the father, before they touched the eye of his daughter; the mothers were there, but said not a word. All being ready, they drew the curtain. M. Dalencé and the others only seeing the patient as yet obscurely, they gave her a short and very unnecessary sermon upon patience, ordered some pillows to be brought, and the surgeons putting themselves into a posture for the operation, the young lady sat up in bed. M. Dalencé looking at her eye, and seeing nothing the matter with it, was strangely surprised. He still gazed and beheld her father, and all those who were present, without saying any thing, being so much frightened. At last, after having closely examined the eye, which he had seen entirely corrupted only the day preceding, which was now so perfectly cured, that they had some difficulty to discern which of the two had been diseased, 'Ah!' exclaimed he, 'what do I see there! My God, you do not wish me to gain my livelihood. The diseases of this house are like a bird upon the wing which flies away when one thinks to touch it. Sir, Sir,' said he to M. Bienaise, 'there is here something divine; we must bear witness to the truth which we clearly see with our eyes.' M. Bienaise was as much astonished as M. Dalencé; and believing the miracle as he did, said that they must be prudent in bearing witness of this in public. 'This house is ruined', said he. 'As much as you please,' replied M. Dalencé, 'we must bear witness of the works of an all powerful God.'

Besogne thus continues: "The surgeon in going out, met the physician, who came to the house, and related to him the miracle, but added, he must not report it on account of the state of the convent's affairs. He took a violent fever at the end of a few days, and when taken with the third fit, he thought that God punished him, perhaps, for his faint-heartedness upon the subject of the miracle. The fever left him, and he began to publish the miracle with a loud voice."

There were 6 physicians and 5 surgeons, who affirmed the miracle. "We must not forget also," continues Besogne, "the late testimony (1728) which has been given to the miracle of Port Royal; Pope Benedict XIII. having quoted it in his homilies which he has had printed, and in which he proves that miracles have not ceased in the church."

"M. Dalencé, in fact, gave his attestation with several of the most famous physicians and surgeons who were acquainted with the case. The physicians were Charles Bonoard, (first physician to the king) Jean Hamon, and Isaac Eusebe Renaudot; the surgeons were Pierre Cressé, Martin Dalencé, and Etienne Guillard. These gentlemen say in their attestation of the 14th. of April, "They have seen several times, together and separate, the child Mlle. Marguerite Perrier; whom they found afflicted during three years and a half, with an œgilops, or lachrymal fistula, in the left eye, the size of a nut. The sanious matter discharging from the eye, the nose, and the palate, was so offensive and fœtid, as to oblige her to be separated from the other boarders. She had been attended and dressed for eighteen months, without any favourable symptoms, the disorder constantly growing worse; when, having renewed their visits after an interval of three weeks, with the symptoms as related, they were ready to apply the last remedy, (the cautery jointly and separately) they found her, as they do at present, perfectly cured; not only of the lachrymal fistula, but the carious bone, the fœtid discharge, and the accessories inseparable from the disorder: and since this cure, thus wrought in an instant, in a malady of such importance, cannot but be deemed extraordinary, in whatever way it is regarded; they esteem that it surpasses the ordinary powers of nature and could only be brought about by a miracle, which they hereby declare it to be."

"The father of the child, says M. du Fossé, who had been sent for from Auvergne, to be present at the operation M. Dalencé was to have performed on the eye of his daughter, was the person who was most instrumental in giving general publicity to this miracle; for finding her cured on his arrival in Paris, he was so transported with joy, that having assembled the physicians and surgeons, and received from them an attestation that the cure could be attributed solely to an interposition of the divine power, he united his voice with theirs in proclaiming this miraculous cure, which was known throughout Paris and believed even by the whole court.*

* The following is from the account given by the M. Angelique in a letter to the Queen of Poland. On the 6th of April she had written "At last the Queen has commanded the Assembly of Clergy to drive us to the very end, telling them that the work belongs to them. I feel no resentment against Her Majesty for this; I know that she thinks she is doing a very good work;.....all that we have to desire

"The Queen-mother felt at first perplexed at the news of this miracle; which was spread to Compiegne, where the court then resided. She felt a difficulty in believing that God had given such a peculiar mark of favour to a house which had been for a long time described to her as infected with heresy; and that this miracle, of which she had heard so much, was wrought on the person of one of the boarders there; as if God had willed to shew the divine approbation of the education given to youth in that house. The Queen did not rest satisfied, either with the letters which were written to her by several pious persons, or with the common report, or even with the attestations of the surgeons of Paris; she sent M. Felix (the king's first surgeon) to the spot; a man generally esteemed for his proficiency in the art, and for singular integrity, charging him to render her a faithful account of all

is to suffer as followers of our Lord, and not as evil-doers." At the beginning of May 'this humble and great soul' thus writes. "I know, Madame, that the kindness of your Majesty towards us has made you take part in our persecutions, and think of us with the greatest grief. You will have then great joy in hearing of the hope which God gives us that he will protect us. For at the very time when all the world thought us lost without resource, it happened that an excellent priest.....sent us a thorn from the Holy Crown to see and revere. Our sisters in Paris received it with great reverence, and having placed it in the middle of the choir, adored it one after the other. When the scholars' turn came, their mistress who led them took the relic, for fear lest they should let it fall; and when a child of ten years old approached who had a lachrymal ulcer so great that it had penetrated even the bone of the nose (we omit the disgusting details),.....it came into the mind of this nun to say to the child 'My daughter, pray for your eye;' and making her touch the relic at the same moment, she was cured. Nothing was thought about it at the time, every one's attention being devoted to the relic. After the ceremony, the child said to one of her little sisters, 'I think that I am cured:' which turned out so true that it could not be told which of her eyes had been affected. God has so arranged the circumstances of this miracle that no one has doubted it. The child belongs to a very honest man from Auvergne, who placed her with us in consequence of her sister's being a nun. She had this disease when she came, more than two years ago, and had been left in Paris for the sake of better treatment. Everything has been done for her that could be done except burning out the place, her father not being able to bring his mind to let her suffer this pain, though he often received tidings that she was getting worse. At last, three weeks before her cure, they brought a surgeon named Dalance, who is esteemed the most skilful in Paris, and who had already seen her, in order to examine her with great attention and make his report to send to her father. He probed the place and found the bone carious.....He said that in his judgment it was incurable; that if there was any remedy it was burning it out; but that he doubted if even this could cure her. As soon as ever this report was sent to Auvergne, the father set out to see what he could do for his child, whom God cured notwithstanding. This man, being very friendly to us, had suffered as much on account of our persecution as of his child's calamity, so that he had been in great grief during the whole journey; but when he drew near the place, he felt so great a thrill of joy that he was quite surprised; and finding his child cured, he believed that God had made him feel by this joy the favour that he had done for him."

St. Beuve, in remarking on the suppression of great names in the above account, concludes '*Miracle apart*, this whole account breathes the most unreserved faith in God, and the simplicity of an evangelical spirit.'—*Ed.*

that related to this miracle. M. Felix acquitted himself of his commission with great exactitude: he interrogated the nuns and the surgeons; made them describe to him the first appearance, the progress, and the termination of the disorder; he examined the patient attentively, and at last declared, that neither the powers of nature, nor the remedies used, had any share in performing this cure, which could only be the work of God. That nothing should be wanting to establish the authenticity of this miracle, it pleased God that it should be verified by the Grand Vicars of the Archbishop of Paris.* These gentlemen, excited by the voice of the public, commenced about the end of May taking regular informations respecting this miracle; which were continued in June following, and again in October. The miracle was verified by M. Hodencq, Grand Vicar and Official, who was also curate and arch-priest of St. Severin.

"We learn the following, on this important subject, from a letter dated October 24th, 1656, from Sœur Euphémie Pascal to Madame Perrier: 'It is now eight or ten days since little Perrier has been examined judicially by the official surgeons, in presence of the Grand Vicar and Official (M. Hodencq); in consequence of which, she has been made to go out with her sister in a secular habit, and he has since pronounced his sentence. I know not if this may be called approbation, or verification of the miracle. We intend in consequence, God willing, to sing a solemn Te Deum on Friday next, with a Mass of thanksgiving. The little Perrier will be in the church without, with a lighted taper; then we shall endeavour to shew forth in part the gratitude which God has diffused in our hearts.'"

Thus far Dom. Clemencet. As memorialists of Port Royal, it became our duty to record an account which one class of readers will deem absolutely incredible, since it wholly contradicts the established laws of nature; whilst to others it may perhaps appear equally impossible, that such persons as Pascal, Nicole, Tillemont, Fontaine, and the M. Angélique should either publish a deliberate falsehood, or be deceived as to a plain matter of fact, obvious to the senses, and relating to one

* The very same party who had the decree already signed to suppress Port Royal.

† See the whole letter in *Jaqueline Pascal; or Convent Life at Port Royal*. London, 1854: pp. 153 et seq.—Ed.

with whom they were in habits of daily intercourse.* Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the mode by which this cure was wrought, one thing is certain. An attestation of the fact was obtained from the very officers who had received the orders for persecution. The first surgeons in Paris were examined upon oath. Port Royal was thronged for many weeks by persons who went to ascertain the truth of their deposition. The consequence was, that the community were freed from any further persecution. The storm was hushed for a season; the recluses gradually returned; and the valley of Port Royal des Champs flourished as before.

Though deprived of its schools, the solitude extended its usefulness, if possible, more than ever. Its fame had been increased by persecution, and its piety was venerated from the patience with which that persecution had been endured. Numbers came to visit Port Royal from religious motives. Many, whose duties still retained them in the world, yet wished to profit by the pious example of this society. They came to retire there for a season, conforming to the rules of the institution whilst they stayed, and keeping up a constant correspondence with its members when they were absent. Multitudes of persons of this description placed themselves under the direction of Port Royal. Conversions without number were constantly made. The Queen of Poland, the Princess Guimenée, the Dukes and Duchesses of Luynes, Liancourt, and Ponchâteau, the Marquisses of Sevigné and Sablé, were but a very small portion of the multitudes who annually retired there, and who edified the world by an upright and godly conversation. There were at this time two hundred and fifty stated inhabitants of Port Royal des Champs, including both the nuns and recluses. The number of those who were under their direction, and who occasionally retired there, amounted to several hundreds more. Thus, from the retirement of this seclusion, they spread a blessing over all France.

* Many, who admit the fact of the miraculous cure, will attribute it not to any specific efficacy in the supposed relic, but to the direct agency of the Lord who before cured by the waters of Jordan and Siloam, and who thus answered the unintermitted prayers of the holy abbess. Those who are curious to see what grounds there are for not receiving the testimony, may consult *Port Royal par St. Beuve*, III, 12. (Vol. III. p. 110 et seq.)—*Ed.*

CHAPTER VII.

Remarkable conversion of the Duchess de Longueville.—Renewed persecution.—Death of the M. Angelique.

AT this period a conversion took place which astonished France. That haughty princess, whose beauty, whose wit, and whose talents had hitherto been made subservient to the most boundless ambition; that same woman, who had plunged her country into the horrors of a civil war, to gratify her own disappointed pride; that heroine, who had so long withstood the great Condé, the Duchess de Longueville became suddenly an altered character. She visited Port Royal. Her schemes of dominion were renounced; the haughty intrepidity of her manner disappeared; her restless and perturbed spirit became calm and peaceful. She brought with her the Prince and Princess of Conti, her brother and sister, and introduced them at Port Royal. The same change was soon perceptible in them also. They deplored with bitter tears the widely extended evils their ambition had occasioned. The immense resources they had spent in maintaining a degree of state more than royal, were now wholly devoted to charity. Their houses, retinue and equipage, became marked with strict economy. Their magnificent revenues were poured with ample munificence into the bosom of those whose fortunes had been injured by the civil war. They did not refuse to make the most humiliating and public acknowledgments of their guilt. Nor did they ever afterwards spend more than was absolutely needful on themselves, till, after a lapse of many years, all the provinces injured by the war, had been fully indemnified by their princely donations.

So splendid an example of the principles instilled at Port Royal, ought to have disarmed the malice of its enemies, and silenced their clamours. It would no doubt have done so,

had they attended to our Lord's rule, to judge of the tree by its fruits. It had, however, precisely the contrary effect. It only fomented their envy, and strengthened their resolution to conspire its utter ruin.

The first formulary, an account of which has already been given, (p. 67,) did not produce the expected effect. The Jansenists had unanimously signed the paper; each at the same time adding a line to his signature, denying the propositions to be in the book of Jansenius, and pointing out wherein they differed.

The Jesuits were enraged at having been thus foiled. They were not, however, deterred from their aim. A second application was made to the court of Rome. Another bulle was prepared, the terms of which were more explicit than those of the former. On the 16th of November, 1656, a bulle was fulminated by Alexander VII. confirming that of Innocent X. It likewise proceeded to declare, that the propositions were not only heretical, but that they were likewise extracted from Jansenius. It concluded by expressly declaring, that the sense in which they were condemned, was the one in which, they were stated in his work on Augustine. This bulle was no sooner published, than the archbishop of Toulouse, under the influence of the Jesuits, drew up a second formulary. The words were express. It was calculated, they thought, to afford no means of escape. It was conceived in the following terms: "I condemn from my inmost soul, and by word of mouth, the doctrine of the five propositions, which are contained in the work of Cornelius Jansenius: a doctrine which is not that of St. Augustine, whose sentiments Jansenius has misinterpreted." Such was the celebrated formulary, dictated by the malice, and extorted by the intrigue of the Jesuits. It proved the signal for all the persecutions that ensued.

Not only all the clergy, but all schoolmasters and all the members of religious houses, even nuns, were required to give their signatures. Four of the bishops refused their approbation, viz., those of Alet, Pamiers, Angers, and Beauvais. When it was presented to the Jansenists, they all with one accord refused their signature. They unanimously declared that the catholic church, whilst she asserts the divine authority of the apostolic see on subjects of faith, yet allows her only a human judgment as to matters of fact. The heresy of

the propositions was, they admitted, an object of faith ; their having been advanced by Jansenius they contended to be a matter of fact. With respect then to their heretical nature, they cordially united with their brethren, and they implicitly submitted to the paramount authority of the apostolic see. With regard to the alleged fact, that such propositions were actually contained in the work of Jansenius, they could not but consider it as coming solely under the cognizance of individual judgment. Whilst then they yielded a blind obedience to Rome as to the former ; they preserved the liberty of maintaining a respectful silence regarding the latter. The nuns declared that the work of Jansenius being in Latin, it was impossible that they could decide on oath upon the contents of a book they could not even read. It might have been reasonably supposed that this excuse would have been sufficient. It proved however the occasion for immediate persecution.

The court, the Jesuits, and the clergy, united with one consent to oppress the Jansenists. Excommunications, fines, cruel banishments, and rigorous imprisonments were everywhere inflicted. The state prisons became thronged. The threats of fire and poison were not withheld. The Bastille was crowded with victims. Even recesses in the passages were converted into temporary cells.

The novices and scholars were directly expelled from Port Royal des Champs, and the directors and confessors banished. The lieutenant of the police, with a troop of horse, was sent to visit both houses. M. Singlin, M. Arnauld, M. de St. Marthe, and M. Saci, were obliged to flee for the preservation of their lives.

At this period the M. Angélique, exhausted by a persecution of more than five and twenty years, was on her death bed. She had spent the winter at Port Royal des Champs in a feeble and languishing state of health, having never recovered a very severe illness, which had attacked her the summer before. For a very considerable time past, she had exhorted her nuns to prepare themselves, by a continual state of watchfulness and prayer, for the tribulation and persecution she had long foreseen they would have to encounter.

It was in Easter week that she was apprized of the violent measures, which had been resolved upon against Port Royal de Paris. Notwithstanding her advanced age, her great

infirmities, and her peculiar attachment to the retired country monastery, she immediately sent word to the M. Agnès, then abbess, that if the community of Paris judged her presence to be necessary at so important a juncture, she was ready immediately to set out. Accordingly, this step being considered advisable by the other house, she immediately prepared to be transported there in a litter.

This took place on April 23rd, 1661. Before her departure, she assembled the whole community of Port Royal des Champs, and took leave of them with equal affection and firmness. The force and earnestness of her exhortations to constancy, the detailed advices how to act under a variety of circumstances, the deep feeling she manifested in parting with each, and the awful seriousness with which she charged them to prove faithful to the end, sufficiently informed them that she, like St. Paul when he took leave of his beloved Ephesian disciples, never expected to see their faces more.

Having bade them farewell, as she crossed the court of the monastery, she met her brother, M. Arnauld d'Andilly, who was at that time one of the recluses of Port Royal, and who was waiting to bid her adieu. As he helped her into the carriage, she said, "Farewell, brother, be of good cheer." M. d'Andilly answered, "Never fear, sister, my courage is perfectly firm and undismayed!" She made him this memorable reply, "My dear brother, let us be humble; let us remember, that if humility without constancy is vilely casting away the impenetrable shield of faith; courage without deep self-distrust, is that ungodly presumption and pride, which cometh before a fall."

The M. Angélique had scarcely proceeded five or six miles, when she met an ecclesiastic coming from the house at Paris to Port Royal des Champs, sent to inform her that the lieutenant of the police had just been to their house at Paris, where he had taken down a list of the names of all the scholars, in order to expel them by the royal command. The abbess answered with her wonted calmness, "Well, sir, under every circumstance, God be praised! I will request of you the favour to go on to inform my sisters, whom I have just left, of this intelligence; and to tell them not to let their minds be troubled, but to let their hearts be fixed, trusting in the Lord." Then turning to her companions in the coach, she said, "My

sisters, God has promised that all things shall work together for good to those who love God; hence they have reason to praise him and to thank him for all things and at all times; let us now then join together to say the '*Te Deum*,' " which they accordingly proceeded to do.

On her arrival, the M. Angélique found the street thronged by an immense concourse of people, the gates of the monastery closely guarded by centinels, and the courts full of armed detachments of the police. On being taken out of her litter, she was carried into the house between files of archers. She found the whole community in tears and lamentation. Her presence however restored some degree of calmness. "How! my dear sisters," said she, "I do believe you are weeping! have you then no faith? you have God, and yet fear the loss of any thing else! believe me; fear God and him only, and all will go well." Then pausing, she raised her eyes to heaven, and with clasped hands, and a look at once of the most fervent devotion and the deepest and tenderest commiseration, she exclaimed, "My God, have pity on us thy children! vouchsafe to bestow upon us all that grace, which may enable us from our very hearts to say, Father, thy holy will be done!"

From this day, however, the whole house became a scene of lamentation and weeping; and the whole monastic enclosure resounded with the sobs and cries of thirty-three children, and several young girls, already received into the noviciate, and who awaited the mandate of their expulsion, as though it had been a death-warrant. The M. Angélique, who had as much tenderness and affection for these children as if they had been her own; felt her heart rent by the pain of this cruel separation. But that to which she was most acutely sensible, was their being taken away, to be placed in scenes which would expose them to the contagion of the world. At every hour of the day they were coming, one after the other, to take leave of her, sobbing and shrieking with despair; whilst she on the contrary consoled and exhorted them to resignation and constancy. This mournful scene was prolonged during eight days; as several of the parents lived in the country, and could not reach Paris to take away their children sooner. The grief of those poor children was so great, that the nun who was their mistress could scarcely prevail upon herself to go into the room. As soon as ever she appeared, they threw

themselves in a crowd upon her, weeping and holding fast by her clothes, and beseeching her to take pity upon them and let them stay. Little ones of twelve years old earnestly entreated to be received as novices, that they might stay. Several of them besought their parents to let them be lay-sisters, as the servants were still permitted to remain. Some of them were two days without eating, and all of them passed whole nights in tears. The grief of the parents who came to fetch them, was in several instances not much less than that of the children: some of them were so affected, that they fainted on the spot.

The departure of the scholars was not concluded, when a new order came to expel all the postulants and novices. This totally unexpected stroke, was peculiarly severe to the M. Angélique. All these novices gave hopes of the most sincere and fervent piety; and the abbess, as well as themselves, felt unutterable pain at seeing them plunged again into the world which they had renounced for ever.

There were three of these young people especially, for whom she cherished, if possible, a yet more peculiar tenderness. These were the two ladies de Luynes, daughters to the Duke de Luynes, and Mlle. de Bagnols. The M. Angélique had educated them herself, and they had been in the monastery almost from the cradle. They all gave promise of the most exalted piety, nor could she forget the fervent earnestness with which their venerable parents had recommended them to her care, nor the solemn and repeated charges they had laid upon her, beseeching her to do all that in her lay to make them worthy of being consecrated to God in her monastery. The young people were now fully grown up: they had exceeded her most sanguine hopes, they were on the point of assuming the dress, and had been awaiting the day with the most anxious impatience. The moment of departure of these beloved disciples being now at hand, the M. Angélique, whose faith had hitherto supported her, felt her wonted firmness at once fail: her heart was rent within her and wrung with anguish; when suddenly raising up her eyes to heaven, she knelt down, and addressed herself aloud to God, for faith to support her in that trying hour. Then rising, she with a steady step and firm eye, conducted them herself to the outside door, where the Duchess de Chevrêuse, their sister-in-law, was waiting in

her carriage for the young ladies. She could not help complimenting the M. Angélique on her fortitude; "Madame," replied the venerable saint, "there is a God who seeth in heaven, and whilst he is, I put in him my trust." The young ladies appeared quite overcome with grief, when the M. Angélique, tenderly embracing the eldest of Mlles. de Luynes, said to her firmly, "Farewell, my very dear daughter! hope thou in God, and put thy confidence in him! As for ourselves, we shall assuredly meet again; and meet in that blessed land, where no power of man shall ever part us more."

Nor was this the only instance amongst her postulants and novices which was deeply afflicting to the M. Angélique; she was especially touched by the case of one young person, the daughter of ungodly parents, who had been received on charity. This girl had such a fear of going out of the house, where she had found salvation, and mixing with the profane associates in her own family, that she was taken very alarmingly ill, and her death was a long time expected.

Another who was already a novice, and who had been under circumstances of peculiar obligation to Port Royal, never would quit her novice's dress; and during the remainder of her life, though her parents were much in the world, she always wore it, and always pursued her religious exercises and acts of charity; saying to those who interrogated her on her singular conduct, "I am a nun of Port Royal, nor can I forget my Zion, though in a land of strangers."

Another young postulant, who came for a choir nun, became postulant as a lay-sister, (or servant,) rather than go. After the persecution was over, the abbess having offered her the rank of choir nun, this pious girl refused, saying she was too much attached to the situation in which God had already blessed her.

Thus were seventy-five persons, including scholars, novices, and postulants, at once expelled by an unjust persecution from the asylum of Port Royal. Two days after this cruel enterprize was accomplished, the M. Angélique wrote in the following terms to M. de Seigné, who had embraced a penitent life for above a year, and who was connected by a close and intimate friendship with Port Royal. "At length our good Lord has seen fit to deprive us of all! Fathers, sisters, disciples, children, all are gone! Blessed be the name of the

Lord ! Grief and sorrow indeed abound, but peace and resignation to his holy will abound yet more. We are persuaded that this heavy visitation is an effect of the great mercy of God towards us ; that it was absolutely necessary to purify our hearts, as with a refiner's fire, from its various corruptions ; and that it is especially valuable in disposing our hearts to appreciate and to apply the favours we formerly received. Believe me, if God has greater mercies in store for us, the persecution will go yet further. Let us then humble ourselves under his fatherly chastening, with our whole heart ; and bless him for a favour so greatly valuable, though so little considered as such by the world. As for yourself, let me beseech you to spend the present eventful period in as much retirement as possible ; and as much as may be, to speak little, especially as far as relates to us. Do not enter into the relation of what is now passing, unless you are positively asked. Listen with kindness, but answer as simply, and in as few words as possible. Remember that excellent remark of M. de St. Cyran's ; that the gospel and the passion of Christ, the most important event to man, and the most bitter sufferings which can take place in human nature, are written briefly, with perfect simplicity, and without the least attempt at human eloquence. Pride, vanity and self-love mingle in every thing ; and since God has united us by his holy Spirit of divine love, we must serve him in humility. The most valuable fruit of persecution is a real humiliation : and humility is best preserved in silence. Let us then keep in a state of humble silence and dependance at the feet of our Lord, and seek our support from his goodness and mercy."

Some of the nuns having one day asked her, what she thought would become of the monastery, if it was thus deprived both of its scholars and novices, she replied, "My daughters, do not trouble yourselves about that ; I feel not the least anxiety as to whether your novices and your scholars will be returned ; but I do feel a deeply earnest anxiety, that thoughtfulness, childlike simplicity, meekness and poverty of spirit, should be fully preserved amongst you. Whilst these remain, give yourselves trouble as to the rest."

Long before the beginning of this persecution which exiled their spiritual directors, the M. Angélique used to say to her nuns, "Let us make good provision of the word of God, which

he now so abundantly distributes to us by the mouth of his servants. These are the years of plenty ; but the years of famine will come, when we shall be deprived of the external assistances we now enjoy : and we shall want all we shall have laid up in the treasury of our minds to sustain us."

In addition to the pressure of the heart-rending sorrows above related, she had superadded the perpetual fatigue of a multiplicity and perplexity of business, the unavoidable consequence of this time of consternation, uncertainty, and trial. Indeed she was in a state of constant exertion and harassment, both of mind and body. Sent for at all hours to the parlour to confer on the most important concerns, sometimes she had to instruct friendly assistants, at others to cope with the chicanery or the brutality of wily or unfeeling enemies. Some she saw to consult, by others she was consulted ; nor did a day pass, in which they did not receive repeated messengers and letters, either of intelligence, advice or inquiry, from Port Royal des Champs ; where a precisely similar scene was transacting to that which had taken place in the house at Paris. Such was the difficulty of their position, and so prompt was the attention required, that it frequently happened that as the day was spent in consultation, the night was devoted to writing the letters which were their result. Added to all this, we must mention the additional hours of devotion set apart by the community during this peculiar season of trial.

Under such complicated burdens, the already shattered constitution of the venerable abbess finally sank. One day she had been engaged beyond her usual practice in offering up her fervent prayers for the preservation of the young novices and scholars who had been wrested from her. Having concluded her devotion and being completely exhausted, she was endeavouring, with some feeble remains of strength, to drag herself from the cloister to the choir, when she was overcome with the exertion, fainted, and sank on the ground. She was carried into her chamber, and placed on the bed from which she never rose more. She was seized with a most dreadful oppression, accompanied by a high fever. Her sense of suffocation was so continual, as to resemble a prolonged and living death ; nor could she for a moment rest her head on the pillow, or lean back ; so that she was obliged to be supported in a sitting posture day and night. Besides which,

she was at short intervals seized with such violent paroxysms, that her death was frequently expected; and in the course of two months, she thrice received the last sacraments.

But though her bodily afflictions were thus grievous, they were as nothing compared to the deep sufferings of her mind. For as she slowly descended into the valley of the shadow of death, and with a footstep that never slid passed through its fearful gulfs unhurt, the adversary of the salvation of her soul was allowed to thrust sore at her, and to sift her like wheat to the utmost. Yet her faith was not suffered to fail. The awful sense of death seemed always present with her.

An observation frequently made by Dr. Arnauld might peculiarly be applied to the M. Angélique. He used often to say that the death-bed of young converts is generally most bright; because their newly acquired sense of the mercy of God, in some sort dazzles their eyes from steadily beholding his holiness; and he generally added that the experienced christian has too solid a view of the mercy of God in Christ, not to rejoice; but he has too exalted views of the holiness of God, not to rejoice with trembling. In the beginning of her illness, the awful part of the prospect seemed chiefly present with the venerable abbess. Death was always before her. She spoke of nothing else, and thought of nothing else; so that she might almost have said with the Apostle, "I die daily." She was so penetrated with a sense of the infinite holiness of God, and of her own unworthiness, that she could not think without awe of the moment when her soul should appear in his presence. "Believe me, my dear children," said she to her nuns, "no one knows how unspeakably awful is death! nor can any person, yet afar off, form the least conception of what it is to stand on the brink of eternity. As for myself, I have had a serious sense of death before my eyes from my early years, and for above the last fifty years I may say it has continually been in my mind. But now that I stand at the very threshold, I find all my most serious thoughts and meditations as less than nothing, compared with the unspeakable awfulness of the reality of what I feel it to be at this hour. The anticipation of such a change as it now seems to me, would alone detach from every human pleasure, and make every pain sit light. As the soul stands between time and eternity, ready to ascend to God, the earth itself sinks and

dwindles into a mere speck, though she can more clearly discern the path she has passed through ! How is it possible for a christian to have any other pain or pleasure or object of occupation during all his life, than preparing himself for this awful hour." Yet though such was her state of mind, her firm confidence in the mercies of God in Christ supported her soul.

While her nuns were sitting with her, she said to them, "We ought no more to let the world take possession of our mind during life, than at the hour of death : " and being often in a sort of dose or lethargy for hours together, she one day said, on awaking, "I never understood so fully as I do now one important sense of that Scripture, which says that where the tree falls there it must lie. O my dear sisters, see the weakness, the incapacity of attention that belongs to illness ; truly, in most cases of sickness, we may say that the tree is already fallen ; it is very seldom moved after."

When she was asked by the nuns what they should pray for, as it related to her, or what they should request their sisters at Port Royal des Champs to pray for, she always made one answer, "Let them only pray God to be merciful to me, and forgive my manifold sins." Sometimes she said, "The mercy of God ! all is included in that word mercy ! Jesus ! Jesus ! thou art my God, my strength, and my justification."

The great humility of the M. Angelique made her even wish not to say anything or to do anything too remarkable, which might occasion her to be remembered with eminent honour after her death : and having been told that the M. Suireau des Anges, for whom she had a high esteem, had said many things which were remembered with edification, she answered quickly, "That dear mother was very simple and very humble ; but I am neither." Having one day surprised a sister taking down several of her remarks, she commanded her to burn it, saying, "It is a pity not to content ourselves with the word of eternal life itself, which contains truth without any mixture of error ; and when I see you, my sisters, more touched and affected by words spoken by a miserable sinner like myself, than by the essential truths of which the Gospel is full, which have converted so many thousand souls to God, and on which we can never meditate enough ; I consider it as a snare and temptation of the adversary of your souls." The nuns having one day requested her to leave them her last instructions,

she said, "Believe me, we have instructions enough, if we did but faithfully use them. No human power can wrest from us the treasure of *true* instruction, if it be truly sought for in sincerity; for the kingdom of God is *within*. But it is curiosity that makes us always hunt after what is new. St. Elizabeth said in her day with fervent gratitude, 'Whence is it to me, that the *Mother* of my Lord should visit me?' How much more gratitude should we feel, since our Lord *himself* visits us; and not only visits us once, but has promised to abide with every one of his disciples!"

On the first of June, 1661, the M. Angélique fell into a sort of agony, which made the whole of the community conclude that the hour of her dissolution was at length arrived; and the last sacraments were administered. After which her sister, the M. Agnès, entreated her to give her dying blessing to the assembled community. She could not speak, but she answered by looking down, clasping her hands, and striking her breast three times, making them understand by signs, that this it did not appertain to a sinner like herself to give. The whole community being one day assembled round her bed, and expressing the great pain they felt on seeing her complicated sufferings, she answered, "My dear sisters, it is all nothing in the presence of eternity at hand." The violence of the paroxysms however somewhat abated, though her life was scarcely expected from day to day.

In this state, the trial which was most acutely painful both to herself and the whole community, was the banishment of their excellent confessors and spiritual directors, M. Singlin, M. de St. Marthe, and M. de Sâci. M. Singlin had been the confessor of the M. Angélique for upwards of twenty years; and it may be truly said, that the spiritual instructions of this eminently faithful servant of the Most High, were her first earthly consolation and dependance. It is easy then to judge how painful such a deprivation must have been, and how sensibly she must have felt both the want of his enlightened spiritual direction and his pastoral consolation and support; especially when that deprivation took place under circumstances of such accumulated trial, and at so solemn an hour. Nevertheless, she supported this heavy affliction with the same resignation and constancy as all her other trials. "It is the will of God," said she, "and that is sufficient! I believe

moreover that M. Singlin and all our fathers in Christ are present with us in the spirit of christian charity and of prayer at this moment, just as fully as if I saw them here with my bodily eyes. I have always esteemed M. Singlin's direction more than any earthly blessing, and I do so still ; but I have never put man in the place of God, He can have nothing but what he has received from God ; and God gives him nothing for us, but when, in the order of his Providence, he is appointed to be with us. Let us go straight to the fountain, which is God himself ! He never fails to support those who put their trust in him." "My nephew," said she, speaking of M. de Sacy, "could be of no use to me, but by the permission of God ; but God, without my nephew, can be all things to me."

One day as she was lying apparently in a doze, she heard some of the nuns who were sitting in her chamber whispering and bewailing their fate, at having no one to conduct them, and at being like sheep without any shepherd. "My dear daughters," suddenly interrupted the abbess, "your ecclesiastics were of the saints of the earth ! let us then shew our sense of their value, by emulating their faith, and practising their excellent instructions, instead of unbelievably bewailing their loss. Believe me, my daughters, we stand in need of all the humiliations God sends us." Then raising her eyes to heaven, and with a voice deeply affected, she continued, "There was no religious house in all France more profusely blessed than our own ! We had abundance of spiritual directors, whose piety and learning were the admiration of the land ; and the good works of several distinguished characters in the world connected with us, brought down the blessing of men upon us ; and the knowledge of truth in clearness and in purity shone with a brilliant light amongst us. Believe me, spiritual wealth has temptations at least as dangerous as temporal wealth. It would have been dangerous to have remained longer in our undisturbed abundance. God has humbled us, lest we should have fallen ; and whilst men give us credit for the knowledge of the truth, God has mercifully afforded us this means of self-examination, how far we have the love of it. Men who persecute us know not wherefore they do these things ; but God, who uses them as instruments, does for us by them that which we need. All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

Meanwhile her bodily sufferings rapidly increased. Her legs and her whole body began to swell ; and she fell into the last stage of a confirmed and remediless dropsy. In this state her sufferings were grievous. She laboured under an extreme nausea, which occasioned an absolute loathing for every description of food. Not only her long continued oppression was very considerably increased, but she began to labour under all the tortures of soreness incident on the want of change of posture and the constant pressure of one position. Whilst she was in this state, fresh measures of persecution were instituted against the house ; and an inquisitorial visit was begun by two ecclesiastics, accompanied by a numerous band of the police. One of these officers, passing through the chamber of the dying abbess, one day asked her how she felt. She tranquilly replied, "Like a person who is dying." He answered, "Do you speak of death so calmly ; does it not amaze you ?" She replied, "No ! since I only came into the world to prepare for this hour."

Not a day now passed in which the monastery was not harassed by fresh disquietudes, or tried by afflicting intelligence. Bad news came, like Job's messengers, from every quarter ; and sorrow after sorrow followed, like successive billows, overwhelming their souls. One day the dying abbess was told, that the officers of police were come with masons and carpenters, to wall up the doors of access to the monastery ; another time, that parties of archers were prowling about the neighbourhood, and lurking in various disguises, searching all the houses, and prying into every corner, in order to discover their confessors, and drag them to the dungeons of the Bastille. Another time, reports reached her, that all the nuns were to be immediately dispersed. But accumulating sorrows had lost their sting, and the vanishing shadows of time and sense could no longer disturb the deep tranquillity of approaching death.

The venerable abbess now seemed fast approaching to her last hour upon earth. She lay in a sort of doze, in which, though her outward senses and her mind seemed closed, yet her heart was still engaged with God. At this hour of extremity, the nuns were all gathered round her bed, watching the approaches of dissolution on her countenance, as she lay perfectly still with her eyes closed and her hands clasped in prayer. They wept in silence, whilst the rattling of arms

without, as the guard was changed, the vociferations of the archers, and the continual knocking and hammering of the workmen, alone interrupted this scene of death. One of the young nuns, who had been educated by her, and who had the most tender attachment for her, could no longer restrain her indignation at this last inhuman outrage. "Surely," exclaimed she, "these men who are thus inhumanly walling up our doors, are at the same time walling up the gates of heaven against themselves!" "My daughter, say not so," said the abbess, unclosing her eyes, on which the shades of death seemed already gathering; "the ground and intention of their hearts are known to God alone, their judge and our judge! Let us rather join in prayer to the throne of mercy, for them and for us." The nuns, however, seeing their spiritual Mother bereft of every human aid and comfort, both temporal and spiritual, in her last moments, could no longer restrain their grief; they burst into tears, and sobbed aloud, or wept bitterly. "My daughters," said the abbess, "I never placed any man in the stead of God! Blessed then be his goodness; I have not now man, but God to depend upon; his mercies never fail those who believe, and who place their reliance and trust in his name." Thus did the peace of God, which passes all understanding, truly keep her heart and mind, and establish it in that support and consolation, which as the world did not give, neither could it take away. She then again fell into a doze, which appeared as the prelude of death.

The nuns were every moment entering the room with tidings of aggravated calamities and violence; they spoke to each other in a whisper, supposing the dying abbess did not hear. She, however, suddenly said, "My dear sisters, when I consider the dignity of such an affliction, I tremble! How unworthy are we of the honour of suffering for our Lord and for his truth! I am abased to the dust in thinking of it."

Nevertheless, the acts of violence which were thus exercised against them, sufficiently shewed how much the mind of the King had been influenced by those who were inimical to Port Royal, or rather to the cause of scriptural and spiritual christianity, the zealous defence of which had rendered it obnoxious. The dying abbess determined, therefore, to address a last letter to the Queen-mother, who had a particular esteem for her brother, M. Arnauld d'Andilly; and, with her dying hand,

to make one more effort, that its last act might be not only of service to her community, but a defence of the cause of truth in which they had suffered. Accordingly she dictated a long letter, which has been considered a model of piety, wisdom, and eloquence; so that the court, on receiving it, considered it as the offspring of the united talents of Arnauld, Nicole, and Saci. This celebrated letter was dictated at various intervals; and almost every line was interrupted by the faintings, or convulsions of its author. When finished, it was read over to the abbess, who again made some corrections, and it was then dispatched. After this she said to the nuns around, "Now my earthly business is done!"

From that moment she would no longer enter into the consideration of any worldly concern, but solely occupied her thoughts with the consideration of eternity. Her eyes were usually raised towards heaven, and she seldom spoke, unless in answer to any person, except to make short ejaculatory prayers or thanksgivings, mostly from the psalms, or other passages of holy writ.

Although some of the nuns continually sat in her room, she liked to have the curtains of her bed drawn, and to be left to solitude. Her weakness and stupor continually increased; but when her friends opened the curtains to see if she wanted anything, her hands were joined in prayer, and the motion of her lips shewed her heart to be still in communion with God. A young nun having, unadvisedly, begun to speak to her on some business, she briefly replied, "My work is now done, it is time to keep sabbath."

As the abbess drew near the end, her assurance became more firm, and her prospects more bright and consolatory; till at last her setting sun shone with a steadfast, glorious, and peaceful light—her fervent faith gilding, with mild beams of heavenly lustre, the darkening prospects around; and reflecting a rich and glorious effulgence, even from the rude and shapeless skirts of those black clouds whose huge and gathering accumulations ushered in, with solemn and yet gorgeous majesty, the benignant closing of her long and bright and well-spent day.

On the 27th of July, she was seized with a violent shivering fit, which lasted for two hours; then lifting up her eyes to heaven and clasping her hands, she said, "This is death! God

be praised ! God's holy will be done ! Blessed be God, for ever and ever !" — which she often repeated. From this hour to the last of her life, she spoke but little, being reduced to almost the last stage of human weakness. It was only observed that she prayed, and that continually. During the last days, she often repeated these words from Isaiah xxxiii. 2. "O LORD, be gracious unto us ; we have waited for thee ; be thou our arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble."

The M. Angélique de St. Jean, her niece and daughter of M. d'Andilly, said to her, "Alas, my mother ! this time of tribulation is already come." The abbess, turning towards her, said, "It is good for us, my daughter." On the 4th of August, the same lady, hearing her pray continually, said to her, "My dear mother, you forget us ; you pray for yourself only." The M. Angélique then clasped her hands, and, exerting all her remaining strength, said with an accent of the deepest emotion, "My God, have mercy upon them all ! My God, I say upon *all* ! Yes, upon EVERY ONE !" She then added, "I am a partaker with all them that fear thee and that keep thy precepts. They who fear thee will see me and rejoice, because I have abundantly trusted in thy words. In thee, LORD, have I trusted ; let me not be eternally confounded." She said this last with difficulty, and then fell into a doze, from which awaking, she said several times, "Adieu ! adieu, my children ! I am going !"

The next day, the 5th of August, the physicians, seeing she was at the point of death, advised the last sacraments to be administered without delay ; at which proposition the abbess immediately revived, and occupied herself in repeating verses from the psalms, whilst her room was preparing. She received the viaticum with a fervour of soul, which animated her whole countenance with a beaming joy and peace that seemed already a foretaste of heaven. Then seeing the community dissolved in tears, she said, "My dear children, adieu, adieu ! Let us go to God !" She then thanked the priest who attended her ; addressed words of exhortation and consolation to the whole company ; gave her benediction to the community ; and, calling them one by one to her, said a few words to each.

After this, she fell into a peaceful slumber, during which her spirit departed to God her Saviour.

The Reverend Mother Marie Jaqueline Angélique Arnauld, died at the age of 70, in the year 1661, on Sunday, the 6th of August; a day on which the church alike commemorates the resurrection and transfiguration of our Lord. Her corpse was exposed, according to custom, at the grate which divided the chapel from the nuns' choir. The news of her death soon spread over Paris. The common people, who revered her as a saint, filled the church, and came in crowds to look at her. For a whole day and night, two nuns were continually employed in distributing little remembrances of her through the grate to the multitude without, who were all bathed in tears. At the time of her death, M. Singlin and M. de Saci, the directors of Port Royal, were concealed in an obscure lodging in the neighbourhood. They heard the solemn stroke of her passing bell. They saw the crowds which thronged the convent-door, and they heard the tolling for her funeral. They guessed the occasion, but it was impossible to have any communication with the monastery. Nor could they make any inquiry, without betraying themselves, and consequently, exposing their lives.

The foundress of an institution which was the light of her century and of her church, by its example; as it still is of ours, by the luminous precepts of piety it has left behind; the latest posterity will be under obligations to the fidelity, with which this excellent nun, when a girl of seventeen, corresponded to the light then vouchsafed her. Those who are more intimately acquainted with the history of Port Royal, will venerate in the character of the M. Angélique, a rare union of the wisdom of the legislator, the energy and intrepidity of the hero, the fervour and spirituality of an evangelist, and the constancy of a martyr.

Before we dismiss this subject, we will add a few anecdotes respecting her, which may be interesting as they mark the same magnanimity of faith, though applied to trivial every day occurrences.

Whenever she was so indisposed, as not to be able to attend divine service herself, she was very exact (unless it were a case of actual extremity) to send all those sisters appointed to nurse her; saying, that it was a consolation, when she could not be present herself, to be able to send others in her place, to worship God in his sanctuary.

As superior of the monastery, she was very assiduous in enforcing a regular and prompt observance of every duty, especially that of attending the sick ; yet she was equally careful to unite with the strictness becoming her office the greatest indulgence and charity as it respected herself, and to inculcate the same upon others. One day being very ill and wanting some assistance, the sister who ought to have been in attendance at the infirmary happened to be absent longer than usual ; another sister, who was also ill, observed, that it was very trying, that the sisters should ever leave their mother so unattended. The M. Angélique answered with a smile, "Yes, my dear sister, were it a frequent *habit* of neglect, I ought as superior to remind my sisters to be in their places at the appointed time : but as an accidental circumstance, so far as I am concerned, I do value and think it useful to have occasional opportunities of learning not to depend on any personal comforts. Sick persons from their necessities so easily and imperceptibly slide into the luxury of self-indulgence ! How many single ladies of expectations and rank far superior to mine, are perhaps through misfortune at this very moment wholly destitute of any attendance : and very many are happy and thankful in having one little maid to do every thing for them ; and while she is out on her business, they are obliged to be left alone. So, my dear sister, when we want something and on calling nobody answers, let us just content ourselves, and think that the little maid is gone to market, and wait with patience till she returns." The sister profited so well by this advice, that she never complained afterwards, though before she was sufficiently exacting ; but when any thing was wanting she said cheerfully, "My mother, the little maid is gone to market to-day."

She always thought it savoured of pride, to be fond of attempting great austerities ; frequently saying that christian perfection in outward conduct consists not in extraordinary things ; but in doing common things extraordinarily well. She often said, "Neglect nothing. The most trivial action may be performed to ourselves, or performed to God. Seek after christian holiness as a miser hunts after gold ; nothing is so small, on which he does not gain some profit. Even in rising to matins, be careful to make no noise, lest you disturb the sick ; if christian charity be in your heart, your whole life

may be one continual exercise of it. Be like David, who on every occasion, instead of coming in and going out from the suggestions of his own inclination, always consulted God, and said, *Lord, shall I go there? shall I do this?* She often said, "There is no christianity without humility. No person is truly humble, who does not sincerely prefer the least person on earth to himself. Where there is real humility, there will be the greatest care not to incommode others. Oh if we did but love others, how easily the least thing, the shutting a door gently, the walking softly, speaking low, not making a noise, or the choice of a seat, so as to leave the most convenient one to others, might become occasions of its exercise."

Many of the nuns who visited Port Royal, congratulated the sisters of that monastery on their superiors. "You," said they, "are indeed happy; your superiors are true mothers; ours are haughty ladies."

The M. Angélique could not endure that sort of pride and spiritual selfishness, which leads some persons to prefer their particular house or religious order to others. She often said, "It is quite insupportable to see religious orders biting each other, and jealous of preferences over each other, just like the most captious and punctilious men of the world. One says, our community is most ancient; another, ours is most reformed: one urges, ours is most austere; another, ours is most liberal: this congregation says, our missions are most successful; that, ours has produced the greatest number of learned men, and our translations are unrivalled. One asserts we are most highly educated, our clergy have the most extensive and distinguished direction; another, our usefulness is unequalled amongst the poor." "For my part" said she, "I see in scripture no such distinctions. I am of the order of all saints, and all saints are of my order. All christians and servants of God are my fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters; and I feel it a privilege and an honour, to love and serve them all, as opportunity offers."

The M. Angélique had great confidence in God, and addressed herself to him on all occasions, before she consulted with any human being. Although she made use of means, and exercised discretion in ordering her affairs, that she might not tempt providence; yet she leaned alone upon the succour and blessing of God. During the raging of the civil wars, many

of her community felt great fear, for which she very strongly reproved them. Amongst other things, she said to a sister who was very timorous, "Our Lord declares that he will come as a thief in the night, in a day and hour when he is not expected. It does not require the assistance of an army to take away our lives. It only needs the falling of a slate, or a tile; or an infinity of other accidents, any of which can destroy us in a moment. The hour of our death and judgment is to us unknown. We must at all times regard ourselves as guilty sinners, who may at any period be summoned to appear before God. And yet, my sisters, you allow yourselves to give way to vain terrors! You deserve that God should withdraw his assistance from you! Do you not know that the Lord is on your side? and that one may say to you, as the prophet Elisha did to his servant, that there are more for you than there are against you? Do you not know, that all the hairs of your head are numbered? that not one can fall without his permission? that the wicked can do nothing but what he sees good? But the fact is, we do not exercise faith."

When the M. Angélique wished to return to Port Royal des Champs, to assist the poor both temporally and spiritually, some ecclesiastics endeavoured to dissuade her, because it had long been abandoned, and because it was unhealthy. But she determined to go, saying that she would never abandon her poor; and adding, "How lamentable it is, that there are so many persons, who dread more to expose themselves to inconvenience than to sin. They fear to live without health, but they do not fear to live without grace. Souls which seem to belong to God, have almost all a back door, through which they endeavour to escape when trials press on them."

She had nothing more at heart, than to wean christians from an undue dependence and affection even on good people: and on occasion of the death of those to whom she was most attached, she often said, "Let us weep as those who have appreciated the gift God has bestowed upon us, and as those who very highly value the image of Christ in his children; but let us not weep with that immoderate grief, which will cause us to add to our tears of sorrow the bitter tears of remorse for having mourned too humanly, as those without hope;" to which she often added, "Yes, my sisters; after all, we lose nothing even in the most grievous of such trials,

if we could but so persuade ourselves. All creatures indeed die and pass away ; but God in whom, and by whom, and to whom are all things, lives and abides and reigns eternally !”

One day the M. Angélique was walking with some of the community in the wilderness ; which was a considerable space of forest land, inclosed indeed within the monastic boundary walls, but divided from the garden, by a brook about twelve feet wide ; and which was therefore at a considerable distance from the monastery itself. In the midst of this solitude they found a very little girl, of the name of Le Conte, one of their scholars, quite alone ; having, as it afterwards appeared, been left for a few moments by the nun who accompanied her, and who was just gone into the hermitage, in the forest close by, to fetch a book. They were all struck with apprehension for the risk the child seemed to have run, though the nun returned in a moment ; when the M. Angélique said, “My dear sisters, what apprehension do we feel at seeing this little child left alone, but for a few moments, in this wilderness ; where after all, no very essential harm could befall her ! and how awful is it, that we feel so little the danger of a soul, which is for one moment separated from God. Oh how infinitely more ignorant is the human soul of its true good, than this little infant is, of what belongs to its temporal safety. How little is the danger of this wilderness, compared with that of the wilderness of this world, which is not only full of thorns and briars and stones, but which is haunted by deadly enemies ;—the wilderness where the fell serpent ever lurks in ambush to sting ; and where the roaring lion perpetually goes about, seeking whom he may devour. That indeed is a dreadful wilderness ! that danger is indeed awful ! And if we had in any degree the same perception of spiritual, that we have of temporal danger, we should see nothing so terrible as to be for one moment separated from communion with God ; wandering alone, without leaning on the arm of the good shepherd, who is our guide. But such is our besotted stupefaction, that we start at the least shadow of temporal danger ; and heed not, though we precipitate ourselves by a vain self-confidence into the irrevocable gulf of spiritual and remediless destruction !”

CHAPTER VIII.

The Sœur Flavie Passart.—M. Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris ; his visit to Port Royal de Paris. Imprisonment of the Nuns.

BUT the most painful part of the affliction of the little community of Port Royal was yet to come. They had, like the primitive church, not only to endure fightings without and fears within, but they likewise were in perils from false brethren. They had to endure the trial of treachery, within the little circle of their own sisters. A short sketch of the lives and of the deaths of the two nuns who were so unhappy as to betray the children of God amongst whom their lot was cast, and who had the signal misfortune of abusing so great a privilege to aggravate their own condemnation, may not be uninteresting or unimproving.

Amongst the hundred choir nuns, who at this period inhabited Port Royal, were two, who were more especially indebted to the charity and bountiful generosity of the M. Angelique. These were the Sœur* Flavie Passart, and the Sœur Dorothée Perdreau. Of the first only we shall now speak.

The S. Flavie was the daughter of a tanner of La Ferté Milon. Her mother was a respectable woman, who, being left without support at the death of her husband, quitted her native village, and was kindly received, from charitable motives, by the nuns of Port Royal des Champs. She was appointed turn-keeper ; and in that capacity, had apartments in the exterior part of the monastery, to which the generous nuns added a pleasant garden. She was also kindly allowed to bring her little daughter with her, who was then but a sprightly child. The young Flavie remained with her mother for some years ; during which she was remarkable for great activity, vivacity, and intelligence. At the age of fourteen, having expressed a

* Sister ; abbreviated S.—Ed.

fervent desire to become a nun, she prevailed on the M. Angélique to admit her on trial, as a postulant, into the monastic enclosure. But after a short time, her exuberant imagination, self-will and levity, were found to assimilate very little with the habits of her sober-minded and religious companions ; so that notwithstanding repeated admonitions, and the long forbearance which the charity of the M. Angélique was anxious to extend to this friendless girl as far as possible without compromising the discipline of the house ; her haughty and unsubdued character, and open contempt of her superiors and of the regulations of the house, obliged them to dismiss her at the end of four months ; though not before her ambitious and intriguing spirit and her consummate artifice, had occasioned much inconvenience, and sowed the seeds of discords which it was not easy to eradicate.

Her wish of embracing a monastic life still continuing, at the age of nineteen, she applied for admission in the monastery of Gif, a pious but unenlightened community. Her apparent zeal, and talent for speaking on spiritual subjects, soon deluded them into an exalted idea of her sanctity ; and without more delay than was indispensable, they admitted her to profession. No sooner had she taken the monastic vow, than she exhibited passionate signs of the most fervent and vehement, not to say enthusiastic religious feeling : for we must term *enthusiasm* that which, being fervent in degree, is yet unsubstantial in foundation. Her whole conduct suddenly seemed to mark the most extraordinary sanctity, at least to those who measured internal sanctity by demonstrative profession. At chapel, at prayer, at fastings, at watchings, the S. Flavie could never be satisfied with doing only what others did ; she was the first to appear, the last to remain on her knees ; on abstinence days she fasted, on fasts she prolonged the time ; and even when her face was veiled, she was always to be distinguished by the number of relics, and pictures of devotion, and good books, with which she was literally burdened. Nor were the good but unsuspecting nuns of Gif less deceived by the multitude of miraculous interpositions and divine communications, with which she professed to be favoured. Few weeks were suffered to elapse, without some malady of the sister Flavie, which was regularly terminated by a miraculous cure : this generally took place on some day

when distinguished visitors were expected to attend service at the monastery, in the choral part of which her fine voice was the chief ornament. The good nuns of Gif had not the matured wisdom and experience of those at Port Royal: and the sister Flavie was herself a very young person, and a novice. 'The heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it?' Probably she herself, as well as the nuns amongst whom she resided, were alike deceived; mistaking youthful zeal and the workings of a luxuriant imagination and fervent temperament, for the established deep conviction and unwearied love of genuine piety. They, as well as their novice, fell into the common error of estimating her piety by that fervour in conversation, which is frequently the fruit of a glowing imagination only, by her eagerness to adopt extraordinary penance, so natural to the love of distinction in the natural heart, and by her constant relations of miraculous interpositions, visions, &c., so often the unsuspected refuge of spiritual self-love. Well had it been, had they judged her piety by the surer test of a humble, retired and thoughtful spirit, strict fidelity in the discharge of little, unobserved and unshewy duties, a lowly charitable walk, a heart too singly walking with God to allow of an imagination easily set afloat, a great care of scandalizing others, and aptitude and willingness to bow under contradiction to self-will, and gratitude and humility under reproof. The nuns of Gif, and the S. Flavie herself probably, forgot that the same self-love which in the world inspires a desire to excel in worldly accomplishments, in an unenlightened religious community leads to seek spiritual distinction by relations of those miracles or visions, which in that community are esteemed peculiar marks of divine favour; and above all the S. Flavie disliked being undistinguished. So far did she carry this taste for miracles, that it would be almost impossible to enumerate all those of which she professed herself to be the favoured subject. She seldom spoke of Christ, nor did she manifest any signs of building her hopes on his atonement, or of finding her peace in communion with him, or of her chief desire being after conformity to him. But her favourite conversation was a gratuitous supposition of her especial favour in the divine sight, manifested by her having been from infancy the subject of miraculous cures. Having remained some time at the monastery of Gif, where her repu-

tation for seraphic piety daily increased, through the injudicious zeal of the abbess who thought she could never sufficiently do her honour, she was introduced to the correspondence of some ecclesiastics of distinguished piety. Soon after, the S. Flavie thought, or imagined she thought, the rule of that convent too little strict, and their piety not sufficiently austere; and with the permission of her too partial superior, resolved to make another attempt to enter Port Royal des Champs, in order to embrace the strictest observances of the austere rule of St. Benedict. There appeared in the first view somewhat noble in the desire of the S. Flavie, to leave Gif where she was so extraordinarily esteemed, and where the rule was easy, in order to solicit admission at Port Royal, the most strict monastery of the order, and one from which she had already received a repulse; and at a time too, when that monastery was entering the thick cloud of a severe persecution. If not only the nuns at Gif but the clear sighted M. Angélique were deceived, is it wonderful that the S. Flavie should herself have been the dupe of the intricacies of her own deceitful heart?

The sequel of her history alone, awakened in the minds of others the suspicion that her ruling motive might be widely different: and suggested the recollection, that the S. Flavie, so admired at the small and undistinguished monastery of Gif, might begin to feel the want of a wider theatre; that Port Royal was in the height of its celebrity, and that its very persecutions were the means of holding it up as a beacon light to admiring Europe; that half the christian church revered Port Royal as a school of prophets, and a land of saints; that its very persecutors were dazzled by the brilliance of its talents; and that the papal throne itself trembled at its success. It was not however till many years afterwards that such suspicions were adverted to. And whether it were really from the inconsistency and love of novelty, which are the necessary fuel to a lively imagination; or whether because the reputation of Port Royal promised a wider sphere of exercise to her boundless activity and intriguing spirit, must ever remain unknown. She however only remained six years at Gif; and determining, if it were by any means possible, to find entrance at Port Royal, she began a correspondence on a pretence of conscience with M. le Maitre, then a recluse there and nephew to the M. Angélique. She wrote well. Her

style was polished and elegant : her temperament fervent, her mind luxuriant, glowing, and imaginative. M. le Maitre, in the deep impression of his own conversion, was peculiarly open to trust the religious professions of others. His charity and zeal for souls, were unbounded ; and especially for those characterized by the fervour, eloquence and talent, by which he was himself so especially distinguished. He only saw the S. Flavie's letters, and as he had no opportunity of knowing her, his imagination and benevolence soon filled up the picture. The nuns of Gif, from whom he could alone enquire, were too undiscerning to perceive the delicate lineaments of those passions, which afterwards shot forth such deep and baleful roots ; and which afterwards overshadowed Port Royal, like the deadly upas tree, spreading death and desolation, as far as the shadow of its fatal branches extend. Nay such are the tortuous sinuosities of human intention, and so often does the ruling passion elude the vigilant scrutiny even of the sincere disciple, that we may fairly not only hope, but believe, that the S. Flavie was herself deceived, whilst with reiterated importunity, and with so much apparent fervour and humility, she urged her wish to be but received at Port Royal, even in the meanest capacity ; that she might be numbered amongst the excellent of the earth, that she might sit at the feet of the saints and prophets, and that she might share persecution and spill her unworthy blood, if needful, with that of the martyrs of that persecuted house.

M. le Maitre soon conceived a high esteem for her ; and his representations were the means of procuring her an entrance into Port Royal. Perhaps the permission was granted the more easily, because of the high eulogiums of the nuns of Gif ; which inspired the Port Royal nuns with a fear lest they had acted too harshly in having before dismissed her ; and even the M. Angélique herself, seemed as though her usual penetration was lulled to sleep by a conscientious fear, lest she had been betrayed into too much severity towards childish errors ; and lest she should unhappily have thwarted a real religious vocation, in a sincere, though very imperfect child of God. At Port Royal then accordingly the S. Flavie in an evil hour arrived. Here she was received gratuitously ; and not only so, but the M. Angélique, knowing all her family to be in the depths of poverty, on the day of her pronouncing

the vows, generously provided for every one of her brothers and sisters; to each of the latter of whom she presented a sum of money, sufficient for their honourable support; and each of the former she placed in some respectable occupation.

The S. Flavie passed through the whole of her noviciate with almost unexampled fervour. She possessed sufficient tact not to begin by bringing forward any of her favourite legends. Or perhaps she was really overawed by the genuine, the solid, and well grounded piety and religious instruction of that house. She contented herself then in the outset, with being foremost in every practice of devotion, and rigorously exceeding in every penance and practice of austerity. Some faults indeed she had; and great as was the charity of Port Royal, they were of a nature not to pass wholly unobserved. That she was more distinguished for zeal than for humility, meekness, patience, or forbearance, was indeed evident; and whilst her imaginative eloquence in religious discourse was brilliant, the simplicity of christianity was seldom adverted to. Though her activity and her numerous penances were often admired, a spirit of thoughtfulness was not observed; but then the kind though judicious nuns of Port Royal, knew that perfection is not to be expected from any one; still less did they expect much spiritual consistency in one so young, and who had, unfortunately, been placed for six years in a community of nuns who, though simple hearted, were wholly unenlightened; and who looked up to her with admiration, seeking rather to obtain, than to give directions. Then her leaving the prosperous monastery at Gif, to take a zealous share in the fortunes of a persecuted establishment, seemed a pledge of her sincerity: so at least thought for a season the nuns of Port Royal. So completely deceived were they that after a time she was appointed sub-mistress of the novices, under the venerable M. Suireau des Anges; a lady who was distinguished by her own exalted piety yet more than by her close relationship to the celebrated Nicole. And such was the talent and fervour displayed, that it was expected by some, that she might in time be placed in the highest posts in that house. The S. Flavie had always been distinguished for superior talent and ingenuity; and all its resources were now directed to the secret object of her ambition, that of obtaining distinction in the convent. These views induced her still to

maintain the highest appearance of sanctity ; and her deep hypocrisy or self-delusion, joined to a terrible judgment of God, were the cause that her apparent piety gained her the greatest reputation and good opinion of those who then governed Port Royal. She took every means to deceive, and spared no pains to ingratiate herself with the most unwearied assiduity into the good opinion of the religious and wise, but wholly unsuspecting nuns ; and for her own irreparable calamity, she was but too successful. They had loaded both herself and her family with bounty, even from childhood ; and it little occurred to their generous minds, to suspect hypocrisy in the poor friendless orphan their bounty had rescued from destruction. They reaped the *transient temporal* evil from their erroneous judgment ; the unhappy S. Flavie incurred the awful and enduring curse of her spiritual hypocrisy and deep ingratitude.

The celebrity of the schools of Port Royal added fresh fuel to the smothered spark of ambition, which lurked in the heart of the S. Flavie. Oh how well would it be, if disciples in receiving the first marks of distinction, truly examined before God, whether they were given in mercy, or as an awful judgment ; as a superadded means of usefulness, or as a trial and temptation, needing a double portion of grace and humility. This consideration did not however occur to her. She believed herself a person of far superior capacity and qualifications to the venerable M. des Anges, who was at the head of the school department ; and instead, therefore, of assisting her as sub-mistress, she soon began to domineer over the children, with a high hand, and to treat her superior with marked want of consideration. It was after a short time visible to those occupied in the same post, that she resented any direction, and behaved with great impatience, when the least fault was hinted at, or the least improvement suggested, in her conduct respecting the children ; so much so, that whenever she received any reproof, she yielded to a sullenness and gloom, which sometimes lasted whole weeks, weeping incessantly, and refusing to eat, till praise for some other thing restored her spirits. After a time, she began the same course she had pursued at Gif. Whenever her conduct was impugned, she professed to be taken violently ill. Under this pretext, her duties were abandoned. She took to her bed, and left the

school to proceed as it could ; but no sooner had she put the whole house to the inconvenience of assembling the community, to deliberate who should replace her, than some sudden miracle never failed to restore her, and to enable her to enter triumphantly the very chapter assembled, who had now only to listen to her account by the relics of what saint she had been thus opportunely restored ; thus tacitly throwing the whole blame of her alleged illness on the superior, by whose reproof it was, as she said, occasioned. The attachment she professed for her spiritual directors was unbounded, so long as it lasted, and was carried to the most exaggerated and fanatical excess : such, likewise, was her professed veneration for holy persons and relics. Thus, neglecting faith in Christ and obedience to his spirit, did she vainly seek a reputation for sanctity ; but no sooner did her directors suggest an improvement, or hint a reproof, than her good opinion vanished, and was changed into as violent an antipathy and lasting enmity. At her first entrance at Port Royal, her favourite saint was of course JANSENIUS. He was honoured in the house she had just entered ; and her esteem of him would, she was in hopes, prove a means of procuring esteem for herself. She placed his picture in her cell, with that of M. de St. Cyran. By degrees she felt her way, to know how far she might build on the credulity of those about her ; and she gradually returned to the same practices, which had so well succeeded at Gif. On a christmas day, when the ground was covered with snow, she entered the school room with the branch of a rose tree in her hand, on which was growing a full blown rose. She exhibited it to the children under her care, assuring them this branch was perfectly leafless, like other wintry branches, a few days since ; but that it had budded and blown on being suspended in her cell, before the picture of M. de St. Cyran. The M. Angélique gravely reproved her falsehood, and never fully trusted her more ; but from that time kept a watchful eye over her, to distinguish whether she acted from the folly of disordered and imaginative fanaticism, or from the deep design of an ambitious hypocrite. The S. Flavie had experienced the unbounded generosity of the mothers of Port Royal ; but whilst she felt the warmth of their charity, she forgot the superior light of their intelligence. She counted on the folly and credulity of those about her ; but her

calculation at Port Royal was mistaken. Intent however on her own plans, she did not pause to observe the effect her conduct produced on the charitable, but sagacious and observant eyes of the abbesses. The children, unable to detect the truth or the fallacy of her relations, eagerly listened to her tales of miraculous vision and apparitions, so confidently communicated; and they began to entertain the highest opinion of one favoured so much by heaven. If her tales were credited, it would appear that few holy persons departed this life, without favouring her after death with two or three visits; nor were there any saints of any note in the calender, who had not repeatedly used their intercession, in obtaining her miraculous recovery from some dangerous illness. One circumstance indeed attending her indispositions was peculiarly remarkable: they always came on whenever it became her duty to do any servile office; and they as certainly miraculously disappeared, on the application of relics, if she were called to any post of honour. After a time she astonished her pupils by professing to divine their secret thoughts, and any little circumstances which had occurred in their infancy, or little plans they had proposed. These discoveries filled the simple hearted children with the utmost surprise; and, at length, they related them with great astonishment to the M. Angélique. But the abbess was not to be so duped. She instantly recollected, that the S. Flavie was the person who kept the keys of the children's writing desks, in which were contained their private letters, journals, &c. The M. Angélique was silent; but immediately dismissed her from this office.

Before this time however her success and her apparent piety had proved the means of her promotion, till, having rapidly ascended the earliest rungs of the ladder, she began secretly to aspire towards the summit. "*Lay hands suddenly on no man,*" is the experienced advice of the inspired apostle; and happy had it been both for the nuns of Port Royal, and for the S. Flavie herself, had they duly weighed the injunction. Meanwhile her professions of divine communications, supernatural appearances, and miraculous cures, as they occurred more frequently, became more and more coolly received. Her new companions began to observe, that whilst laying claim to so much that was extraordinary, she frequently and increasingly failed in her ordinary but unobtrusive daily

duties. It was remarkable that a person should be so favoured by God, who manifestly attached herself so exclusively to that which was splendid in the eyes of men; and it was singular, that one professing a state of much angelic rapture should be so little careful in maintaining ordinary christian tempers. Hence the very means to which the S. Flavie resorted to establish her reputation for extraordinary sanctity, became the occasion of infusing the first doubts of her sincerity, and of inducing some of the more experienced nuns wholly to question her religious profession: and when the M. Agnès and the M. Angélique stood in doubt of her, and gradually paused in the career of advancement they had incautiously allowed her to enter, though they still retained their wonted kindness, she felt that their eyes were partially opened, and that it was only by an apparent change of character she could obtain their esteem; which esteem she ardently wished, as the only road then apparently open to that advancement which was her true object. Zeal in favour of Jansenism would effect this. She did not know the spirit of true disciples of Christ; and that it is only with false professors that the union of opinion which forms a party stands in place of that union of principle, which alone cements the living stones together upon Christ the rock and only true foundation.

Accordingly, from that time, she did not so much stand firm under their persecutions, as combat violently; always proposing the most extreme and unconciliatory measures of resistance, instead of opposing to the wrath of man, only meekness, patience, and spiritual wisdom. This by no means succeeded in raising her in the esteem of the truly excellent abbess. Her violence in their cause was not the sobriety of the conviction of truth: still less was it truth working by love. Thus the very means by which she hoped to win the favour of her superiors, proved the cause of deepening their distrust, and of their avoiding more and more to take her into their counsels. As their eyes became more fully opened, they began gradually but progressively to separate her, more and more, from their confidence and their deliberations. It was obvious that such violence and enmity could not be the genuine work of the spirit of God; and that the more holy the cause, the more was it desecrated by enlisting in its service such unsanctified passions. The wise and pious

abbess, therefore, feeling that the S. Flavie was acting in her own spirit, instead of in that of Christ, though little suspecting her hidden springs of action, gradually found it advisable to remove her from places where she was entrusted with any spiritual care of others. She was taken away from the care of the children, and established stewardess of the house. Finding her schemes did not succeed, that all her hopes of advancement at Port Royal were over, and that instead of aspiring to any of the highest offices in the house, she must now content herself with one, which though temporally high did not conduct to the abbess's throne, she became wholly changed. True only to her ambitious spirit, she now resolved to ingratiate herself with the enemies of Port Royal; and especially with the Archbishop of Paris, who was at their head. How little do we, at the moment of departure from God and of yielding to evil passions, perceive the termination of the course; and how continually the evil, first allowed in the will, betrays us to that tempter, who beguiles on from precipice to precipice, from fall to fall, till his unwary dupes find themselves engulfed in eternal and inextricable ruin! At the period of which we speak, probably the S. Flavie Passart only felt nettled at being no longer solicited to fill offices of which she imagined her talents rendered her capable; and when, giving way to her resentment, she revenged herself by fomenting the dissensions between Port Royal and its ecclesiastical superiors, she probably only at that time intended to compel the M. M. Angélique and Agnès to place her in the offices she coveted, and to oblige them to yield her some post of honour, through the authority of the Archbishop. Had any one then told her, that she would cause the imprisonment of her benefactresses, and the adoption of measures, by which the lives of many of her sisters would be miserably sacrificed, she would have probably thought it impossible; and replied with Hazael, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do these things?' Oh how awful a thing is it to depart from the living God, and to hearken to the voice of a stranger! One evil yielded to opens the source of others; and how often, as the awful punishment and judgment for wilful departure, does God permit stronger temptations to urge, and the besetting sin to find its full scope, and thus to draw down its full retribution.

She resolved then to compass, if possible, the ruin of those to whom she was indebted for all the comforts she possessed. This however she could not accomplish overtly ; not only could she attain her end more surely and with less inconvenience to herself, by becoming a secret traitor than an open enemy ; but likewise, having professed to outvie every person in the house in zeal for Jansenism, she could scarcely unblushingly turn about, and immediately espouse openly the precisely opposite side. It might indeed have seemed a sufficiently difficult task, to accomplish persuading the archbishop of Paris and the Jesuit party, whom she had so violently opposed, of her sincerity. Had they been good men, they would doubtless have felt little inclined to trust one, who began by undertaking the part of a spy, to betray those among whom she professed to live as a sister. But how easily do persons delude themselves, when governed by worldly interests. The court was adverse to Port Royal : and the archbishop was the creature of the court. It became then necessary for him to find a tool by some means. Hence he easily received the secret recantation of the S. Flavie, who professed that she clearly saw the error of her ways, and should never have embraced the errors of Jansenism, but from having been misled by the subtlety and dangerous finesses of the nuns of Port Royal ; that she had been overborne by the commanding talents of the M. Angélique, and the M. Agnès, and the literary acuteness of their niece the S. Angélique de St. Jean ; and entangled in the wiles of sophistry, by the two ingenious young nuns, the S. Christine Briquet, and Eustoquie de St. Brégy Fléscelles. She had indeed, she confessed, for a time fallen ; but God in distinguishing mercy had vouchsafed by an especial revelation, not only to unmask all their plots, and to shew her that she was to obey her superiors in all things ; but, as a still more signal favour, he had appointed and selected her to atone for her past transgressions, by more effectually devoting herself to the service of the hierarchy ; by narrowly observing the nuns of Port Royal, and secretly bringing the archbishop and his myrmidons a report of their proceedings. The archbishop's anxiety to obtain a tool, by whose instrumentality he might please the court, induced him to an easy credence ; or at least to an easy profession of credence in this tale. The S. Flavie was secretly restored to his favour ; and from thenceforward,

devoted herself to become a spy over her sisters, and to betray her benefactresses.

From that hour she became devoted to the Jesuit party. Her great zeal for Jansenism caused her to be wholly unsuspected by the nuns. It now apparently greatly increased; thus enabling her effectually to act the double part, of fomenting all the scruples of the nuns against signature; pointing out every passage of scripture against denying Christ, and urging them to the most decided opposition; and then betraying to the archbishop the scruples she had herself excited, and the councils she had sometimes alone supported, or even suggested. By these means, she vaguely hoped, and not without reason, that the archbishop might be induced to depose all the officers, and possibly some of the superior nuns; after which a re-election must take place, in which she herself could not fail to come in for some considerable office, both from the interest of the archbishop, and as the just meed of her distinguished talents. With this view, she outwardly professed renewed zeal for the cause of the persecuted nuns; whom she in vain sought by every means in her power, to stir up to such violent and improper measures, that they might irritate the archbishop to dismiss them: but this scheme having failed, she secretly exercised her talents for invention, not only by betraying the counsels they really held, but by wholly misrepresenting their conduct and words. Her treasons began in the year 1661, almost immediately after the M. Angélique's death. It seems singular that this very S. Flavie Passart was mistress of the children at the time of the occurrence of the remarkable cure of Mlle. Perrier; and that she was the very person, who bade the child pray as she applied the sacred thorn. She also was the first person who declared its miraculous effect. Hence she was doubly guilty, in thus acting counter to what (whether the fact were true or false) *she* had herself not many months before declared to be supported by a notable miracle.

The S. Flavie at first confined her ambition to that of deposing the present officers: but M. Péréfixe, the archbishop, having one day hinted, that they might be imprisoned for a season, and dispersed in other convents, till the monastery was reduced to obedience, she at once beheld the door open to that career of ambition, she had imagined for ever closed

against her. She doubted not, that if she could but obtain the exile for life of her benefactress, her abilities and services would be of the greatest use to the archbishop in influencing the community, and that he would therefore, if she could only effect their expulsion, without question install her into the abbacy itself. She therefore used redoubled diligence in endeavouring to insinuate herself into all their counsels; both to exasperate the nuns against their ecclesiastical superiors, and to envenom the mind of the court party against them. Although the nuns had not the slightest suspicion of her treachery; yet the violent measures she counseled, made them not anxious for her presence. They were not long however in discovering that they were betrayed; and that their most secret counsels, and the part taken by each, were immediately made known to their enemies; though they could not imagine who was the traitor. The S. Flavie persuaded the archbishop that, if twenty six of the principal nuns were imprisoned in various monasteries, the rest might be reduced to obedience by a person of talent and devoted to the church; which expression she thought could point out no one but herself. Accordingly one morning the archbishop came, attended by a long train of civil authorities, to Port Royal de Paris. The following account of his visit is extracted from the relation of one of the nuns.

‘On Thursday, August 21st, his grace the Archbishop arrived at half-past twelve. Having first entered the church, he commanded the attendance of the whole community, to whom he made a long discourse, the object of which was to declare that since they had refused to subscribe the formulary condemning Jansenius, he was resolved to exercise his authority in compelling their obedience. He then required a list of all the sisters of Port Royal, arranged in the order of succession in which they had entered the house, with the family name, and religious name of every nun respectively affixed. He then commanded them in a voice of thunder to choose between obedience and liberty; or disobedience and exile, excommunication and imprisonment. After that he ordered the community to retire into the room of the M. Agnès, which was close by; and that each nun should appear separately before him, according to the order of priority, and one by one severally accede to the signature, or submit to the sentence

Our little company, full of consternation and fear lest either themselves or any in their community might fall, thus having to encounter singly the authority of the archbishop and his clergy, felt as the disciples did when each enquired '*Is it I?*' In this state of awful suspense and distrust, they pressed round the M. Agnès, then in her seventy first year; the only surviving foundress of their reform. She took the testament, and at the place at which she opened, found the text, '*This is your hour and the power of darkness.*' "Yes," said the venerable abbess, "this is indeed the hour of the powers of darkness; but the same God has also declared, '*as thy day, so shall thy strength be;*' and has commanded, that '*he who walks in darkness and has no light, should stay himself in peace upon the name of the Lord.*'"

'We all then thought, not only that the hour of suffering was come, and that Satan was about to sift us like wheat, but that our Lord prays for his church, as he did for that apostle on whom it was founded, that their faith should not fail. We then read together our Saviour's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before his passion, and there sat together at his feet in silent supplication: first one and then another going out as the one preceding returned and silently took her place; all remaining in the most painful suspense, and none knowing who had proved faithful.

'In this state things remained during four hours; the archbishop employed the time in endeavouring to shake the constancy of our little group; after which he ordered the whole community to assemble in the chapter-house, which was accordingly done. The pause between our assembling and his entrance was a most anxious one; none knowing what part the others had taken, but from the opinion they might previously have formed of their fidelity. The archbishop soon entered in full pontificals. His countenance was terrible. He seated himself in his chair of state. He then rose in the midst, and said that seeing their disobedience, obstinacy, and rebellion, in preferring through pride what they termed *conscience* to the judgment of their superiors, and not having yielded to their remonstrances; he now declared them rebellious, disobedient to the church, and incapable of participation in the sacraments or any other holy thing. He therefore forbade their approaching the altar, as wholly unworthy, contumacious and mutinous;

and moreover, he warned them to prepare for his return at the earliest day, to denounce a signal punishment which should make them tremble. He then turned his back upon us, and prepared to go. Our whole assembly wept in silence, and in excess of grief. The archbishop, just as he was going out, perceiving through the windows several carriages of visitors just arrived, and amongst others that of the Princess of Guimenée, who was a particular friend to the house; turned back a few steps, and, addressing himself to the sisters who were not yet dispersed, exclaimed with a warmth and terrible emotion: "I expressly forbid you all, and every one, under pain of rebellion and disobedience, to have any communication whatever with any one individual out of this monastery; and if you have the hardihood to contravene this order in any degree, you shall see the consequence, aye, and bitterly repent too of disobeying your archbishop." The S. Angélique de St. Jean answered, "All punishments, my lord, must be light after deprivation of the sacraments." Our excellent abbess, Mde. de Ligny, being about to speak, he stopped her before she had uttered a sentence, by saying in a fit of exasperation amounting to fury, "Hold your tongue, hold your tongue! you are a little, proud, impertinent, self-conceited fool! wholly destitute of common sense, talking of what you know nothing, in short a pert, insolent, ignorant fool! you know not what you mean, and one need only to look in your face to see it." So low could the burden of supporting a bad cause, sink the dignity of the Archbishop of Paris! perplexing him, and making him equally forget that he was by profession a christian, by birth a gentleman and a noble, and by God's providence an ecclesiastic of the first rank, in that kingdom which professes to hold the first place in Christendom. Whilst speaking in this strange manner, his footmen and pages were assisting him to put on his cloak. Some sisters, having besought him in vain to restore them to the participation of the sacraments, on his refusal added, "Well, my Lord, there is in heaven a Judge, who reads the intentions of the heart, and who knows that a conscientious scruple alone prevents our immediate compliance with your wishes; and to him we commend our cause." To which he answered, "Aye, aye, when we get to heaven it will be time enough to consider that, and see how things go."

'The abbess having said, "My Lord Archbishop, it is not many weeks ago, since your grace made an official visit of our house, and drew up a document of attestation to the piety and good order you were pleased to say prevailed there;" he impatiently answered, "What is all that to the purpose? what signifies it that you are holy, virtuous, religious, and pious? I tell you though pure as angels, you are proud as Lucifer, if you refuse to yield your conscience to your superiors." Our sisters, in the agony of being refused the sacraments, fell at his feet and said, "O my Lord, this is the bitterness of death;" to which he replied, going away, "Go, go, comfort yourselves, you shall not die without having the pleasure of seeing me again, and that right speedily too!" So saying he entered his carriage, and departed. We went to church to say the *miserere*, which we did prostrate, and with so many tears and sighs, that our words were scarcely intelligible but to God who reads the heart.

'A few days after this episcopal visit, a lady informed us that it was currently reported in Paris, that the principal officers and nuns of the monastery were to be imprisoned. Various reports reached us from day to day. All agreed that most violent measures would be resorted to; and the archbishop was reported to have reiterated at a public council several times: "These nuns will not sign, because they make it a point of conscience *not* to do it; but I make it a point of honour, that they absolutely *shall* sign." On the 25th of August, the archbishop went abroad early in the morning, and his carriage, as well as those of his emissaries, were seen hastily going from convent to convent; which left little doubt, but that he was securing cells for the imprisonment of those nuns he meant to remove; and that he would most probably next day put his plan in execution. The news of these measures, together with all the reports that reached our ears, sufficiently convinced us that our hour was come, and that we were on the eve of the separation so long threatened. This we had feared above all things, and it was equally terrible to us, both in a spiritual and in a temporal point of view: in the first, as we dreaded lest the horrors of a long and rigorous solitary confinement should cause us to fail; on the other, as we shrank from a separation from persons so dear to us, and whose counsel had been our greatest earthly means of support

and consolation. In this terrible trial most of us passed the night of Monday in the choir, in prayers and tears, before the holy sacrament. It was from the very bottom of our heart, that we implored the divine mercy and support. We did indeed feel of a truth, that '*without him we could do nothing ;*' and we besought him, if possible, to avert from us a tempest which, humanly speaking, seemed so disproportioned to our great weakness ; or if it were his will that we should drink of this cup, that he would enable us to take it even to the dregs, without dishonouring his most holy cause, or flinching from declaring his truth. We earnestly prayed for the spirit of the apostles, who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer these things for his name's sake.

The night being thus passed, next morning the bell rang for assembling at the usual hour. As we convened, we looked upon each other's faces as those who might perhaps see each other in the flesh no more ; and at that hour, how little did differences of taste or disposition between some of us appear. We only felt and viewed each other as those who were united by the strong bond of all being ready to suffer for our common Lord. The Abbess being obliged at this trying moment to be absent on business, the Prioress held the assembly. She began by stating, that this would probably be the day of our dispersion. She spoke of the strong bond of union in the truth, a union which no change of time or place can sever. She then most humbly asked pardon of the community, for any faults she might have committed towards them ; and commended herself earnestly to their prayers, not knowing whether she should ever see them again. At this moment a person entered, to give notice that six nuns of St. Mary had been sent for by the archbishop, who were to hold themselves in readiness to accompany him that day to Port Royal ; probably to occupy the places of those he intended to remove. The S. Anne Eugénie immediately went out to the aged M. Agnès, to whom she said with her usual peace and tranquillity, "My mother, the hour is come ; this is the day of our dispersion : then turning to the parlour, where the venerable M. d'Andilly, then aged seventy-six, was waiting for his sister, she said in saluting him " 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' " Immediately after, the M. Agnès entering said, "My dear brother, I cannot converse with you, but I

came to say with you 'This is the day ;' " which having said, she took hold of both his hands between hers, and said with deep emotion, "My dear brother, farewell ! we have often conversed together *of* God ; we must now converse only *with* God, but often *to* him of each other. He will be in the midst of us ; he will be present with us ; and when he is present, no blessing can be wanting. Farewell, dear brother ! " Meanwhile she proceeded, supported by S. Anne Eugénie, to the assembled community. Our abbess had been spending the short time that remained in reading various letters, which had been written to us during our persecution ; saying that she thought nothing more calculated to strengthen us. "Except seeking strength of our Lord himself," said the M. Agnès, entering whilst she was yet speaking ; when with one accord, they prostrated themselves in silence before him, calling on him like Hannah in their hearts ; but no voice was heard ; tears alone flowed. They called, and the God of peace answered, and revealed himself by filling their hearts with a peace past all understanding. The venerable M. Agnès first rose from her knees, and, addressing the community, said with a deep humility which cannot be described : "My dear sisters, only a moment remains to me ; I wish then to employ it in most humbly asking pardon for all the faults I have committed amongst you, both in direction, and in all ways. I beseech you to pray God, that he may give me grace to accept the humiliation and deprivation to which he calls me. I shall probably see your faces on earth no more. At my age, it is most unlikely I should return. Pardon me then for faults, which towards you I cannot repair ; and give thanks with me to God, that he has permitted me to suffer with you, my dear children, for his truth."

"Scarcely had she uttered these words, at which all the community were dissolved in tears, when a sound of carriages and horses' trampling and voices, was heard ; and a messenger ran in breathless to announce the approach of the archbishop in full state, with a train of ecclesiastics, constables, and armed men, followed by eight coaches. The grief and consternation excited by this intelligence cannot be expressed ; tears, cries, and groans, were heard on every side. Every body ran here and there, not knowing where they went. The abbess was informed that the almoner of the archbishop wished to

speak to her. She went down to the parlour, where many followed her.

The M. Agnès returned to her own room, and was just about to kneel down to prayer, when the nuns rushed in, and with one accord threw themselves at her feet, and in tears implored her blessing. She excused herself, saying, "God, my children, is the source of blessing; he is the fountain of all benediction." But they still urging her in great distress, she clasped her hands and said, "I do, my dear children, with the heart of a mother who will never see you more, commend each and all of you, to him with whom are all benedictions." So saying, she laid her trembling hands on the head of each, embracing each as she knelt before her. But their grief quite overpowering them, especially the younger ones, who were crying aloud, the S. Angélique de St. Jean, then mistress of the novices, and a worthy niece of the M. Angélique, said, "My sisters, God is present, and can you thus despair?" A bell now ringing in the parlour she went down, and found M. Chamillard an ecclesiastic of the archbishop. He told her that she should go to the church to receive the archbishop. She replied that all the community were about to assemble in the choir, and to open the great grate of inclosure to hear what it might please his grace to say. M. Chamillard answered, with a look of ineffable contempt, "What of that, my sister? all that show of respect will profit you nothing." "Sir," replied the S. Angélique, "we wish to consider, not what will profit us, but what belongs to the respect we owe to our ecclesiastical superior."

Whilst our mother was speaking to the archbishop's almoner, the nuns were all pressing round the venerable M. Agnès, taking, as they thought, a final leave of her. Some closely embraced her, without having power to utter a syllable; others cast themselves at her feet, where they remained as it were half dead; others recommended themselves to her prayers; and others conjured her to say something to each of them, of which they might retain a remembrance, as of her last words. But what could she say, in so pressing an affliction? or how could she suffice to answer so many? Her actions, or rather her tranquillity, spoke more forcibly than words. Her countenance marked indeed intense feeling, but its settled peace was not disturbed; and her force and constancy, the fruits of

her long tried and eminent piety seemed alone to be the stay of the whole community. At last, having paused to allow a certain expanse of feeling to her sisters, she looked round on them with compassionate tranquillity and said, "My dear sisters, I can only say, rejoice always, and in every thing give thanks ; in *every thing*, once more, give thanks ; for from all, we shall reap abundant blessing." Her words, and the manner which accompanied them, seemed to touch every heart ; and those who came to mourn knelt down, with power to close with thanksgivings and songs of praise.

'The S. Agnès of St. Thecla, finding herself animated by this spirit, said to the M. Agnès that she had often felt confusion in reading the scripture, 'Behold we have left all and followed thee ;' thinking she had left nothing, except wealth and a title, and the luxuries of life, which are nothing : whilst on the other hand, she had gained in that monastery every thing ; her relations whom she best loved having retired there ; and having found in her new associates, not only infinitely more than she had lost, but more than she had ever hoped for ; and with that, peace of heart and mind : but that she now hoped, for the first time in her life, to be favoured to be one of those who really leave all which is most truly valuable and dear, to follow Christ.

'The S. Margaret of St. Thecla, attracted by the guards and constables, who now began to pour into the court yard of the monastery, ready to use force to compel our expulsion, said, "O my mother, is it possible that we, who are such unworthy disciples, should be sent for '*with a band of men ; with swords and staves and chief priests,*' just after the manner of our Lord himself ?"

'The gates of the great court of the monastery being then opened, the archbishop's state coach, with others containing his officers, silver cross bearers, and ecclesiastics, and eight empty coaches, accompanied by twenty constables with staves and eighty soldiers fully armed with muskets on their shoulders, entered and arranged themselves round the court, with loaded fire-arms and fixed bayonets. Guards were placed at the doors ; and the archbishop alighted from his coach in full state, with his large archiepiscopal silver-gilt cross borne before him, his mitre on his head, and his train borne by numerous ecclesiastics.

"The archbishop then entered the church, followed by all his train, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, and kneeling before the altar, sent one of his almoners to advertise the abbess of his arrival ; and to desire that the gates of enclosure might be thrown open, for the reception both of himself and those of his train he judged necessary. The abbess, accompanied by all the other officers of the monastery, and by the whole community, entered the ante-choir to receive him, and the door of the sacraments was thrown open ; when the archbishop entered, accompanied by twelve ecclesiastics, his grand vicar, his official, his almoners, his grand silver-gilt cross bearer, his secretary, and his notary apostolic. The door being shut, he ordered the community to attend in the chapter house.

"When they were assembled, he began a discourse, by representing his own mildness, and the obstinate resistance of Port Royal to the decrees of the church ; and after dwelling at much length on his own long forbearance, he proceeded by declaring that it was now time to adopt other measures : that he had already interdicted them the sacraments, or communication with any persons without ; but that the day was now come to imprison the most refractory, and those whose influence might be supposed to extend over the community. He was now present to execute that design, and desired that they would listen attentively to the names of those he meant to take away. He then repeated the names of the M. Madeleine of St. Agnès Ligny, abbess ; the M. Catherine Agnès of St. Paul Arnauld, sister to the M. Angélique ; the S. Angélique Theresa, daughter to M. d'Andilly, who was to accompany her aunt ; the M. Marie Dorothée ; the S. Angélique de St. Jean, and twelve others, all of whom he ordered to be withdrawn, and imprisoned in separate convents till further orders.

"As soon as the archbishop ceased speaking, our mother said, "My Lord, we esteem ourselves obliged in conscience to appeal against this violence ; and we hereby appeal and protest against it." All the community joined in one voice in the same sentiment. "What," replied the archbishop, "do you protest against your archbishop ? take care it is not worse for you ! I laugh at all that ; protest, appeal, address, do all you will, but you *shall* obey me !" Then turning to the officers, ecclesiastical and civil, who were with him, he said, "Gentlemen, you know your duty, do it." The officers at

once rose, and seemed about to seize on the nuns ; when our mothers and several sisters rose, and approaching the archbishop assured him that they should yield without violence, though without prejudice to their formal protestation and appeal against the legality of his measures.

"All the community then with one accord prostrated themselves at his feet, and besought his mercy, representing that he well knew that conscience alone withheld them from obedience as to the signature ; declaring the excess of grief to which he thus reduced the community by rendering them orphans ; and that he was giving the death blow to the M. Agnès, whose wisdom and piety were in honour in all France, who was in the seventy-first year of her age, and who within two years had had three attacks of apoplexy ; that it was forcing a dagger to her heart, thus to ruin the establishment her late sister had formed ; that God would at the day of judgment judge this unjust sentence ; and that then our conscience would not fail to be recognized. He mocked again, saying, "Aye, aye ; we shall see, we shall see. It will be time enough to settle the right of the business when we get there."

"Some of the sisters having thrown themselves into the arms of our mothers to bid them a last farewell, fearing they might never see them more, he turned them out of the chapter house where they were standing, and sent them into the choir, where they remained in prayer. The archbishop then went to the M. Agnès and the Abbess, whom he reproached, saying that their own brothers being bishops, they ought the rather to honour the episcopal character in him by paying him instant obedience, instead of refusing compliance to that to which the rest of the world submitted. One of the nuns having her packet to arrange, he said in great wrath, "Why does she not come instantly ? I will have her seized by the neck and heels if she does not appear instantly." In short, his anger was so violent that when his prisoners were assembled and he bade them follow him out, he even passed the door, which he knew perfectly well, until reminded by the S. Angélique de St. Jean, who shewed it to him. The Abbess, being on the threshold of the door, humbly asked the archbishop to inform her what was her destination ; but the archbishop, instead of acquainting her, took her roughly by the shoulder, and pushed

her out, answering harshly, "Get along ! get along ! do not trouble yourself ; it is enough that I know it."

"Our other mothers and sisters went afterwards. What most called forth the compassion of those who witnessed it, was the M. Agnès, who, on account of her great age and infirmities, could scarcely get into the carriage, though assisted by a chair. Yet the tranquil serenity of her countenance, and the constancy exhibited in those of her companions, imparted consolation, even to those who were left behind. M. d'Andilly stood at the door amongst several friends, to bid the last farewell to his sister and daughters. As he drew near the M. Agnès to bid her adieu, she said to him in a low tone of voice, but in one which sufficiently marked her constancy, "It seems to me, my brother, that as Caiaphas said formerly that it was necessary that one man should perish that the nation might be saved, so now we may almost say that one monastery must perish for the truth, that all others may not lose the knowledge of it."

"He received also his three daughters, who threw themselves at his feet as soon as they perceived him at the door, in order to implore his last benediction. He gave it to each separately, they not having come out together, with all the tenderness of a good father, but with deep grief. He exhorted them to constancy, and conducted each successively to the steps of the altar, to offer her a second time to God ; it being the same place where he had himself led up each, to make her religious profession. Each time he offered them as living sacrifices, yet how wide was the difference ! At their religious profession, they quitted the world to join a society of the excellent in the earth, and that, a society containing very many of their own nearest and dearest relatives. Now, they were at one stroke to be severed both from each other, from every one they knew upon earth, and from all who might be spiritual helps to them. On quitting the church, he accompanied each to the carriage, and helped them in. Indeed he performed the same good office to all the captives. The ecclesiastic who accompanied the S. Angélique de St. Jean wishing to give her some temporal consolation, she looked down on her scarlet cross and replied, "I expect no consolation from temporal things, but from Christ alone. We carry the image of his cross on us ; may we bear the impression of its reality *within* us. In the cross of which this is a representation, I place all my hope."

As the carriages filed off, the archbishop said laughing, "Well, we have just sent off twelve ; we will now do the same good office to twelve more." So saying, he returned to the choir, where he was much surprised to find the nuns assembled, and the services conducted with as much fervour and devotion as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. The archbishop then visited the whole of the house and gardens, followed by all his suite, both civil and military. After many scenes of similar violence to those already exhibited, he assembled the nuns once more, and declared that having taken away their own officers, he was about to introduce others, under whose control he should for the present place them ; for which purpose he had selected six nuns of the order of the visitation, to replace their exiled companions ; and that they would arrive immediately. Accordingly, about an hour elapsed, during which the archbishop manifested the utmost impatience at their non-appearance ; opening the door repeatedly, calling his people, and commanding that one messenger should be sent after another, till they appeared. He then paced up and down in the ante-choir. His chair of state was presented to him, but he refused to be seated. Happening to see some of the lay sisters weeping, he exclaimed with great contempt, "Be silent ! you have no cause to weep, you ought rather to rejoice ; your mothers are taken away because they were heretics and disobedient like yourselves !" M. de la Brunière, wishing to apologize for the archbishop, said to the S. Eustoquie de Brégy, "My dear sister, be comforted, this cannot last long ; his grace, I am sure, however appearances may seem to the contrary, feels more pain at what he is obliged to inflict, than your mothers who are imprisoned feel at this moment." "I do not doubt it, sir," replied the S. Eustoquie. "With respect to our venerable and excellent mothers, they, by the grace of God, only experience a conflict in their natural affections ; but the peace of God is in the bottom of their hearts ; they serve God, and therefore their consciences are at rest." After some hours spent in scenes of a similar description, the archbishop took his departure for a season, after again having urged the sisters to receive the strange nuns as their officers. This they answered by a positive refusal to comply, having officers of their own ; and because the nuns he proposed sending were not only illegally

imposed on them, since they were not elected by their own choice; but moreover, being nuns of a different order, they were not even capable of being elected, had it been their wish."

We will subjoin a short extract from the journal of one of the exiled nuns, which is interesting, both as exhibiting the spirit of Port Royal, and because it is from the pen of the celebrated S. Angélique de St. Jean, who was afterwards distinguished as the abbess of Port Royal in its most difficult times. She was at this period mistress of the novices.

"The first words that rose to my lips, when I entered the choir, where the archbishop had assembled those of us who were to be exiled, in order to separate us from the community which remained in the chapter, were those of St. Ignatius, '*Greatly do I rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer bonds for Christ*;' and the first emotion of thankfulness was so great, that I felt as complete an abandonment of the future, as if I were going that moment to martyrdom and were never again to see the house or the persons I was quitting. Indeed I think I was in the disposition of persons ready to die; who are ordinarily so occupied with the vast thoughts of that blissful eternity on the verge of which they stand, that they are no longer engaged with those regrets and yearnings of human tenderness which they once entertained for those they loved best. I considered all my earthly attachments but as the various parts of the one complete sacrifice I was called on to offer, which was to be dismembered before it was consumed; and I only thought of presenting to God, all the persons I left behind, with the same unreserve with which I offered myself. I had some time to wait, whilst my twelve fellow victims were assembled. After having received the archbishop's benediction I went out. My father was at the door, in waiting for me. I threw myself on my knees before him, to ask for his blessing; it being reasonable that he should bless the victim, whom he for the third time offered to God. Then he conducted me to the same altar to which he led me when I assumed the religious habit and took my vows. The lieutenant of police was standing at the door of the chapel, and asked my name; I told him my religious name, S. Angélique de St. Jean; on which he demanded my family name. Some persons near him, said in a whisper, '*She is led by M. Arnauld d'Andilly*;' it is one of his daughters!' He made a

sign with his head, that he knew it well, but he wished to have the pleasure of making me repeat a name, now so odious. I then told it aloud, without blushing; for, in such circumstances, confessing our name is like confessing the cause of God. From thence my father led me to the steps at the rail of the altar; where I do not doubt but that he sacrificed me to God in his heart, like his Isaac; for though not his only child, I might just then perhaps be in some sense considered so; as he had just given up my two sisters who went before me. I silently made my sacrifice on my part also; when raising my head, my eyes caught the picture over the door, of our Lord as the good Shepherd, walking amongst thorns, and carrying his lambs in his bosom. I could not refrain from saying aloud the verse, 'Thou good Shepherd, thou true Bread!' My father then led me to the carriage, with my S. Candide le Cerf, Helene and Gertrude, and an ecclesiastic unknown to me. It seemed to me a good presage, that God gave me as companions of my journey, those of my sisters whom I believed were most strong in their faith. We said not a word on the road; each praying to God separately, and each feeling that the Good Shepherd we invoked was indeed in the midst of us. I felt but little pain during our journey, my heart being so overflowing with gratitude at the favour of being selected to suffer such shame for his truth, that I could only sing anthems and hymns of thanksgiving in my heart the whole way; and amongst others I remember especially that of the dedication, 'Jerusalem, blest city.' I believed that we had the favour to be amongst the living stones of that spiritual temple, fashioned indeed separately, and by repeated blows of the hammer; but that every blow would square and polish it, till it should at length in God's good time, be fitted for its place in the temple of the new Jerusalem above; of which God is the light, and where sighing and tears are for ever fled away; and where I trusted, I should soon be united with all the beloved company I had left.

"I was the first who was set down at the convent of the Annunciation; having embraced, and bid a long farewell to my dear companions, who waited, while the ecclesiastic who accompanied me delivered up his prisoner to the prioress.
* * * Being now alone in my prison, at the end of a long loft or gallery, and separated by four strongly bolted doors

and passages from the inhabited part of the house, I thought it probable my trial might not continue long ; being subject to sudden attacks in the head, which render me insensible ; and which would be fatal did I not receive immediate help, which in a room so remote, I could not call for. It was however a sensible relief, after a whole day of such cruel constraint, to find myself alone. As soon as the bolts and bars were shut upon me, and I heard the steps of my jailor receding through the long passages, and one door locked after another ; I prostrated myself before him, who is present every where, and who led me into that solitude to live with him and for him. I thanked him for his grace, and earnestly besought him to renew my strength, day by day, for the combat. But when night was come, and I rose from prayer and was about to lie down on my couch to seek rest ; I felt as if my heart, which had been sustained till then, suddenly fell from a great height and was broken by the fall. In one moment I felt overwhelmed and torn with all the separations I had endured, and with the sufferings of those I had left behind. In vain I tried to turn the eyes of my mind from the view ; my wearied frame and memory refused to obey ; I was obliged to give free course to my tears ; and, to say truth, I shed very many in the course of that terrible night, in that awful conflict and combat between grace and nature. I had no other arms than the shield of faith to repel not merely all the fiery darts of the wicked, but all the tendernesses of nature : but blessed be God, though my heart *was* torn, the anchor of faith, sure and steadfast, *did* hold my soul upon the rock. The storm indeed raged, but I felt sustained by the deep conviction of the happiness God has attached to suffering for his sake ; the advantage there is in losing all for the kingdom of God, and to partake of the cross of Christ that we may likewise be partakers of his glory. The next day, when my jailor appeared to conduct me down to mass, the first words I heard, in approaching the choir, were, '*Those who go forth weeping, sowing precious seed, shall reap in joy, and return laden with sheaves.*'"

In this prison the S. Angélique was confined for ten months ; often being ten days together without seeing a creature, except her jailor, who was forbidden to speak to her, or to stay a moment longer than to set down the bread and water, which were the only sustenance allowed her.

CHAPTER IX.

Port Royal de Paris under the Nuns of the Visitation. Separation of the two Houses. The Sœur Dorothee Perdreau.

WE return from the exiled nuns to the bereft community of Port Royal.

The abbess and nuns, who held the chief posts in the monasteries of Port Royal des Champs, and Port Royal de Paris, having been seized, and temporarily imprisoned in the convents, that they might be induced by intimidation and hard usage to give up the point in contest; the archbishop of Paris had sent other nuns, of the visitation, of the convent of St. Mary, to fill up their places. This he did, partly to seduce the community of Port Royal into compliance by persuasion, or terrify them by authority; and partly to act as their jailors, that they might prevent the possibility of their drawing up any formal representation against this unjust and illegal usage, or of such a document, even if drawn up, finding its way beyond the walls of the convent. Thus were the unfortunate nuns of Port Royal not only deprived of their own officers, but were compelled to submit to the government of nuns, not elected by their own community, which was necessary to their lawful establishment; and whom it would have been wholly out of their power to elect, had they been so inclined, as they were persons of a totally different religious order. They were bound therefore, to bear their testimony against this total infringement of their constitution. The strange nuns established themselves at first in the infirmary; where they however only spent a few days. For seeing they were there too remote to watch over the actions of the community as narrowly as they had been enjoined, they came out into the body of the convent. The bereft captives meanwhile, spoke to their jailors with the greatest circumspection. They

endeavoured by every means to avoid communication with them; but when it became necessary to speak, they did so with great respect and politeness. This was the more easy, as they knew those nuns had this odious office imposed on them without any solicitation on their part, and probably much against their inclination. The nuns of the visitation on the contrary used every possible effort to enter into conversation with those of Port Royal. This was particularly done by those more especially charged by the archbishop with the office of converting, or rather of subverting them; which these good but mistaken nuns conceived to be a very important duty, and hence engaged in it with much zeal.

The day after the lawful superiors had been taken away, M. Chamillard, a creature of the archbishop, whom he had forced on the nuns as their ecclesiastical superior in defiance of their constitution, assembled the bereft community; and commanded them, on the part of the archbishop, to place all the keys of the monastery in the hands of the nuns of St. Mary. To this the community replied, that it would be out of their power to comply; that the nuns entrusted with the keys by their lawful superiors had no power to deliver them up but into their hands; nor could they under any circumstances, receive as superiors, nuns not even belonging to their own order. M. Chamillard seemed much chagrined; and told them they had better submit, seeing they must do so in the end. In the afternoon, the M. Eugénie, the superior of the nuns of the visitation, assembled the nuns of Port Royal under pretext of paying her respects to the community; but with the real intention of executing the designs intimated by M. Chamillard. After embracing some of the nuns, she stated to the S. Françoise Claire, who filled the post of turn-keeper, that she had orders from the archbishop to place at the turn, in her stead, two nuns she had brought with her: one to attend the turn, and the other to transact all its business with those without; that therefore she had nothing to do but to deliver up the keys of the enclosure and of the parlors. This the S. Françoise refused. In vain did the M. Eugénie urge that their own officers were now taken away, and that consequently they ought to receive whomsoever the archbishop appointed. The S. Françoise replied, that in the absence of their lawful superiors, although they might willingly receive

any persons she might choose out of their own number, which however would be an infringement of their rights, as their officers were elective, they had no power to receive any others." When she retired to the turn, she found the strange nuns already established there by the M. Eugénie. She did not however yield up to them the keys, which the Port Royal nuns retained till some time afterwards. The two nuns of the visitation, who closely watched at the turn every thing that went in or out of the monastery, were thus ready, through M. Chamillard, to give immediate notice of any suspected circumstance to the police. They proceeded to station nuns of the visitation as sentinels in the cloisters and the dormitories; to prevent, if possible, the Port Royal nuns from holding any private communications with their own sisters. Thus were they reduced in the space of half a day to a state of captivity in their own house. In the mean time the M. Eugénie and her assistants treated the Port Royal nuns with the greatest haughtiness and insolence. One of their priests, M. Bail, observed that he thought the Port Royal nuns had been treated with far too much lenity: that in Italy or Spain, they would have been dressed as devils and burnt alive!

Two indeed of the nuns of St. Mary, were very different from the others; the MM. Meaupeau and Sourdier. They were persons of contracted minds, yet of amiable dispositions, and shewed their captives every kindness in their power. The M. de Meaupeau especially was an eminently devoted nun, and her conduct was truly edifying. She was much attached to the nuns of Port Royal: nevertheless, she also seemed to consider that they were greatly mistaken, in not blindly obeying their superior. This nun was aunt to the celebrated Minister Fouquet. During his prosperity she often prayed that something might happen to humble him for his good; and though his disgrace was accompanied with circumstances she could not wish, yet the nuns of Port Royal derived abundant subject of admiration and edification, from the way in which she conducted herself throughout the whole affair, and more especially during his trial. It seemed quite doubtful whether even his life would be spared. Yet in the midst of this heavy affliction and disgrace, at the advanced age of seventy, her peace remained uninterrupted, and her chief desire was that all might be done to the glory of God. Per-

haps the sorrows of her own family made this good mother feel more sympathy for the Port Royal nuns. There is no doubt however but that it was truly odious to her to be charged even in name with such an occupation. She earnestly sought her dismissal; saying that though she could not join in sentiment with the Port Royal nuns, she could yet take no part in augmenting their sufferings. Her dismissal was granted; and when she went to embrace the nuns, she said to one of them, "Well, my sister, I only pray God, that he may give me the grace to find in heaven a place at your feet." And indeed we must add that all the nuns of St. Mary, had they not been placed in such an odious situation, were well capable of edifying their prisoners in many things. Their zeal for their vocation, their love for evangelical poverty, their charity to the sick, were truly admirable. Even these virtues, however, under the influences of their narrow views, proved some of the most cruel means of tormenting their fellow prisoners: for no sooner was any nun taken ill, and more especially if she was in extremity, than these good but injudicious nuns took their stations at her bed side; and began interminable discussions on their revolts, rebellion against the pope, heresy against the church, and disobedience to the archbishop; sometimes with tears, and at other times with threats, assuring her that she would die without sacraments, and be everlastingly damned as to her soul; and that her body would be thrown on a dunghill and deprived of christian burial. Such were the tender mercies of these nuns to their prisoners. In short, as there are some bodily diseases which preclude persons from the use of their senses; so the notion of blind obedience which possessed these daughters of St. Mary, was a moral paralysis which produced the very same ill effects on them mentally. This notion seemed not only to impede the powers of their souls and hearts and minds, but actually to suspend the functions of conscience; to take away the use of their spiritual senses, and to abridge them of the holy liberty which God has not only bestowed, but absolutely *commanded* his children to use, in discerning between right and wrong; that the one may be adopted and the other rejected. So that these good but narrow-minded nuns might be truly said, 'to have eyes and see not; to have ears and hear not; and hearts without understanding.' All the daughters of St. Mary were

formed on one and the same model ; all were pervaded by the same spirit : and all (as might be expected from persons adopting it) were of a very limited capacity. Such were the persons, well intentioned but narrow and bigoted, whom the archbishop of Paris most injudiciously established in the place of the Mères de Ligni, Agnès, and Angélique de St. Jean ; to conduct a community, containing a greater number of the most enlightened persons of their sex, of the best instructed in general knowledge, and in the grand and solid principles of religion, than in any community throughout christendom. Under this domination, persons were no longer encouraged to speak of the precious blood of Christ, of the outpouring of his Spirit, of the spirit of prayer, of a circumspect walk, and of communion with God ; but only of the virtue of blind obedience, and of the duty of signing the formulary ; just as if all religion, and salvation, and damnation, were suspended on believing or disbelieving, that the five condemned propositions were to be found in the Augustine of Jansenius ; a latin book which none had probably ever seen, and which certainly none of the nuns of the visitation could have read.

A few days after the entrance of the M. Eugénie, she demanded the constitutions of the order, that she might read them and assume the reins of government, without being obliged at every moment to ask for assistance from those she was to govern. Accordingly, supposing that the twelve who were taken away comprehended all the persons of talent in the community, and that she should find no difficulty in subjugating the rest, she began to issue her orders in the most authoritative manner. But she soon found herself mistaken. It was calmly and respectfully observed to her, that so long as she staid, they wished to shew her every respect which could be paid to the most distinguished visitor ; but that their officers being in existence, though absent, they could not elect others, and still less form a precedent so contrary to their rules, as obeying one not of their community. The nuns then, without acquainting the M. Eugénie, proceeded to elect temporary substitutes for their officers amongst themselves, and obeyed them in all things as though their own abbess had been at home. Every day the M. Eugénie undertook some new encroachments, particularly that of holding the assembly and the chapter. This the nuns resisted for a con-

siderable time ; but hearing it was intended to imprison many more of their number, it was thought that it would be more expedient to stay together in their monastery, than to cause the loss of those who remained by resisting what was after all a mere form by which they did not feel bound. The nuns being then all assembled to hold their first chapter, the nuns of St. Mary entered, and the M. Eugénie declared she alone should hold it, notwithstanding all their representations of the illegality of her proceedings. The Sœur Françoise Agathe, sub-prioress of Port Royal, and consequently their head now that the others were taken away, then rose and said aloud, "My sisters, the M. Eugénie is about to hold the chapter, but without prejudice to our appeal, and our acts of protestation against it." From that day, the nuns of St Mary attended all the offices. They always however manifested the greatest inquietude, when any of their prisoners, especially those who wrote with elegance, were absent : because it had been especially recommended to them, to use the utmost precaution and vigilance that their prisoners should not be enabled to communicate together, to draw up any protestation or appeal to the law ; or that if drawn up, it should never find its way out of the walls of the house. Nevertheless all their vigilance, united with the perfidy of the S. Flavie Passart, did not prevent the nuns either from holding communications from without, or receiving necessary advices from time to time ; which enabled them to unveil, in *procès verbaux*,* the crying acts of injustice which their persecutors wished by every means to conceal from the public.

Whilst the M. Eugénie endeavoured by a union of force, stratagem, and ever wearying and renewed contentions, to render herself mistress of the house and to establish her pretended superiority, the S. Flavie, like an evil genius, unobserved and unsuspected, glided amongst her sisters ; insinuating herself into their counsels, all of which she betrayed, under the guise of being herself one of the most determined on their side. Thus were the saints of Port Royal, like the apostles of old, in perils of false brethren : and this trial was more deeply felt than all their others. Their sweetest consolation, till the time their mothers were taken away, was the perfect

* The form, according to French law, by which application was made for judicial enquiry.—Ed.

peace and union that reigned amongst themselves. The demon of discord had now entered in. And he who had permitted that there should be found one Judas amidst the apostles, permitted that there should also be found a traitor in the house of Port Royal; that his handmaids should be favoured to drink of the same cup with their Lord, and show this trait of conformity with their divine master.

The S. Flavie soon perceived that the nuns of St. Mary could only be at Port Royal for a season. Being of a different order they could never remain its legitimate superiors. She might, she imagined, easily succeed in establishing the resolution of the archbishop, to keep the abbesses imprisoned for life; and if she herself became subservient to him, and was useful in revealing their plans, and exhibited the talent of which she had a large share, who so likely to gain the envied office of abbess as herself? Nay, the archbishop would be compelled to yield it to her, as the only nun of her order and of the same community whom he could permanently substitute for the exiled abbess. Her part was then, to gain over some proselytes to the same views from amongst her weaker sisters; whilst in the mean time, under the most profound mask of dissimulation, she entered into all their counsels, to betray them; and to urge all those nuns who were distinguished for talent, and who might be her rivals, to such steps as might seal their disfavour with the archbishop. Accordingly, she expressed to the community her great sorrow, that they had not used more forcible expressions against the formulary; and taxed them with expressing too much respect to their ecclesiastical superiors. She assisted them in secretly drawing up a very decided *procès verbal*, and several other pieces; but on the day of signature, she was very opportunely as usual taken ill, and prevented from herself signing it. When the pieces were once sent forth, she as suddenly recovered, and bitterly bewailed having been prevented from adding her signature.

The nuns were however not long without receiving advice that they were undoubtedly betrayed by some one of their own number. Accustomed to judge favourably, they could not persuade themselves that the intelligence was true. During this period, the archbishop came frequently to the monastery, and endeavoured by private conferences with the nuns, sometimes terrifying them with threats, and sometimes de-

meaning himself by cajolery, to induce them to submit. After one of these visits, the S. Euphrosine said with deep grief to the S. Genéviève, "My sister, I have seen his grace the archbishop, but I am sure that there must necessarily be one traitor amongst us, who reports to him every thing; because he knew exactly all which passed in the interior of this monastery in the time of our Mothers. It is truly deplorable, but I assure you that nothing has here been resolved on or transacted amongst ourselves, in the most profound secrecy, of which he and M. Chamillard are not immediately informed, and that of councils at which the nuns alone have been present." These circumstances combined with various others did not fail to impress the S. Genéviève, and persuaded her that a party was by degrees forming, and a division gradually taking place in the very heart of the community. Several sisters entered into her views, and circumstances daily occurred, which appeared to place their conjectures beyond all possibility of doubt. But who was the guilty individual, they could not even conjecture. Their state of suspense was almost unsupportable. The total ignorance and uncertainty, as to those who might or might not be implicated, and its necessary consequence of infusing the greatest distrust of each other, rendered their situation most afflicting. Each of the poor nuns was obliged to concentrate her grief in her own bosom, lest she might be addressing herself to some concealed enemy.

When it was necessary to deliberate upon the affairs of the community, they were constrained to speak before those, who listened only in order to betray them. Thus were they reduced, neither to be able to communicate their affairs in public nor in private, without an inevitable danger of being betrayed. If their resolution was worded in a manner too soft and respectful, it only afforded their enemies hold upon them. If on the contrary, it was too rigorous, they were treated with still greater harshness. If they did not consult together, they were exposed to the evils of not acting in concert; if they took mutual counsel, they were assuredly betrayed. Thus did they continually walk between contending difficulties. Situations however did occur, in which they were compelled to exhibit their genuine sentiments; to shew the respect which they owed to their legitimate but exiled superiors; and

to mark by their conduct, that they could neither recognize the M. Eugénie as their superior, nor M. Chamillard as their director. This firmness exasperated their jailors to the greatest degree ; and they began to publish on all sides the foulest calumnies, not only against their doctrines, but even against their characters ; M. Chamillard most falsely insinuating on all sides, that they were abandoned to the greatest disorders, and had cast off even the form of religion.

Meanwhile M. Chamillard assailed them by establishing conferences and sermons, the whole of which consisted of homilies on the duty of passive obedience, the danger and sin of disobedience. His discourses were most frequently one tissue of invective against themselves, interlarded with the most injurious epithets, and calumnious tales of their imprisoned friends and superiors ; comparing them to every rebel, heretic, and schismatic, who had ever troubled church or state, from the time of Cerinthus to that of Madame Guion. He closed his first harangue in these terms : "You think to be martyrs ? so you shall be, but to the devil ; and instead of a crown of glory, your portion shall be the flames of hell !" At the third of these conferences, the nuns, not thinking it right to assist in thus profaning the pulpit which ought to be the oracle of truth, nor yet choosing to hear such atrocious calumnies against their imprisoned mothers and sisters, mostly rose and departed. The fanatical preacher became so incensed that he broke off his discourse, and quitting his place rushed to the grate which separated him from the nuns' choir, and transported with fury shook and struck it with all his force, exclaiming with a voice of thunder, "Those who go out shall never be received to communion more ; they shall die without sacraments, and be thrown as carrion on a dunghill. There are canons excommunicating all who go out whilst the word of God is preached." On this the S. Flavie, trying to detain the S. Angélique of St. Alexis, hypocritically said, "Alas, my dear sister, had not you better stay ? what if you should be unhappily excommunicated ?" The S. Alexis answered aloud and firmly, "The canons of the church do excommunicate those who go out when the word of God is preached. But this is *not* the word of God. Let the word of God be preached, and we will listen." After the conference, M. de Chamillard sent for the S. Eustoquie de Flescelles and abruptly addressed

her thus : "You too I suppose were one who went out?" She replied, "Indeed, Sir, you do me injustice ; I did not." On which he began praising her, and wishing the others to follow her example ; to which she replied, "Indeed I wish so too ; for then not one would have been present, in the first instance." From that day most of the nuns withdrew from his conferences and his confessional, both of which became deserted ; and M. Chamillard found himself a priest without a flock. His complaints, added to those of the Mère Eugénie, and to the reports of the S. Flavie, who assured him that the nuns would rather die than yield, determined the archbishop to exert himself to devise some new and more effectual measures.

The persecuted nuns, meanwhile, had demanded and obtained on the 10th of September, letters of chancery by which it was permitted them to cite the archbishop of Paris and all who were concerned, to answer before the parliament of Paris, for the part they had taken in the illegal measures they had perpetrated, and the violences the nuns had endured. These letters were signified to the archbishop, M. Chamillard, and the intruding nuns, on the 15th of the same month, with the assignation to parliament. The bereft community of Port Royal then imagined themselves on the point of obtaining justice. But it was easy for one, who had so strong an interest as the archbishop in not having his violence and illegal proceedings condemned, to prevent the nuns from obtaining justice ; and he accordingly obtained a decree of the privy council, by which the king interdicted all knowledge of this affair to parliament, and transferred it to the hands of his own council. Now, as M. Péréfixe had taken the part he had, simply in compliance with the views of the king, it was easy to foresee the termination of any proceedings before the royal council.

Meanwhile, the S. Genéviève determined to use every means to discover by whom they were betrayed. She therefore divided the whole community into three bands, placing over each a nun whom she could thoroughly trust. These bands were to read and consult together, at different times and places, and on different subjects, and the three heads were afterwards to confer together. The reading consisted of pieces sent by their friends, for their consolation and edification. The S. Genéviève justly thought that by observing

which of the bands had its proceedings divulged, they should in process of time find out the traitor; resolving, in case her plan succeeded, to subdivide that band again, and so on, till they discovered the individual. Accordingly, one day when about twelve nuns were assembled, reading a letter of M. de St. Marthe, the S. Flavie gave notice of it to the M. Eugénie, who made them a rigorous reprimand. They soon observed, that the division whose counsels were revealed, was always the one in which was the S. Flavie. Whilst however they were in some doubt, it was clearly discovered who the traitor was. The archbishop having one day brought copies of some of their archives, the treachery of the S. Flavie was made apparent; as she was at that time procuratrix, and had the sole care of the papers, and consequently no other person could have shewn them to the archbishop.

About this time, the duplicity of the S. Flavie became manifest from another source. Some years before, and in the midst of their persecutions, she had had a long conversation with Mlle. Perrier, the same who was the subject of the miraculous cure, respecting the signature of the formulary. The S. Flavie expressed great fear lest the nuns should yield, and besought her to ask for instructions from M. Pascal, her uncle, that she might both sustain herself, and fortify her sisters. Mlle. Perrier asked M. Pascal, who complied with reluctance, and on the express condition that no copy should be taken; that the S. Flavie should communicate it to no one; and that she should restore it in six weeks. She did indeed restore it, but not until after she had shewn it to M. Chamillard, who took a copy. This happened in 1662. Three years after, that is in 1665, a work appeared by Père Annat, in which that Jesuit adduced long extracts from the MS. of Pascal. Then the Mlles. Perrier went to the S. Flavie, and reproached her with her treachery, which she could not deny. They also taxed her with having betrayed the house, by revealing its counsels and adding much of her own, and thus obtaining from the archbishop the exile of the sixteen principal nuns, to the end that she might be chosen abbess herself: to which reproach they added another, respecting Mlle. de Roannés, whose banishment she had occasioned by her calumnies; that lady having, at the S. Flavie's instigation, been exiled to Poitou; and when the Duke of Roannés her father enquired

the reason, he found it was this nun who, having accused her of resisting the formulary, had been the means of her disgrace.

The S. Flavie now completely threw off the mask. She watched them from every corner, and established the strange nuns as spies over them. Inimical persons, nay even persons of infamous character, were posted at all the turns, so that they could hold no communication from without, but through their enemies. Jesuits were sent to them as ecclesiastics, to denounce damnation and threats of excommunication. Their gardens were given up to a party of soldiers, established there in defiance of all decorum as a guard; so that the nuns could not walk out, but were wholly confined to the house. Meanwhile the heat of the summer was intense, and a contagious fever broke out in the monastery; death succeeded to death; the sacraments were refused to the dying, and even in the agonies of death, they were terrified with threats of excommunication; the unrelenting S. Flavie, the twelve strange nuns, and the ecclesiastics, going from room to room, to terrify and entangle the consciences of their victims, and to insult them in their last hours. Meanwhile at length, six out of the hundred nuns yielded to the artifices and persecutions used, and signed the formulary; amongst whom were two nuns who had for four years been in an imbecile state; with one other on the point of being expelled for bad conduct; and a fourth, who was afterwards the most celebrated, the S. Dorothée Perdreau; a person of pious feeling, but very limited understanding. She was of low origin, and of very moderate fortune, and had been received by the M. Angélique gratuitously; who nobly gave the whole of her portion on the day of her profession to her brother, sending him her contract torn to pieces. This nun, after being much entangled in conscience, yielded; and from that hour, became the passive tool of the S. Flavie: who, after many months, finding that the imprisoned nuns did not yield, nor the community submit, and being now unmasked, began to fear what might be her situation should the abbesses return. In order then both to accomplish her ambitious projects of seeing herself the head of a community; and also to screen herself against the return of the nuns who had been exiled; she suggested to the archbishop the idea of separating Port Royal des Champs from Port Royal de Paris; of sending to

the old monastery the remainder of the refractory nuns ; and of placing the six nuns, who with herself had signed the formulary, in Port Royal de Paris, constituting it a separate community, who should elect an abbess from amongst themselves ; not doubting but that in that case the choice would fall upon herself. Thus unjustly did she excite the archbishop to wrest for these nuns, what the bounty of the family of Arnauld had bestowed on the whole community ; and thus did she propose to take for seven persons an entire third of the provision destined for above one hundred and thirty.

No sooner was this design formed, than the S. Flavie resolved vigorously to push it on. In her character of procuratrix of Port Royal des Champs, she had the care of all the stores ; she therefore profited by rising even at two in the morning, and surreptitiously sent out, day by day, carts loaded with stores of every description to the monastery of which she hoped soon to see herself at the head. Furniture, house-linen, provisions, clothing, stores for the various offices, all was pillaged. The nuns of Port Royal des Champs were in great astonishment at seeing their house thus dismantled, and were wondering to what it was to tend ; when a mandate of the archbishop, contrary to all observances of law, declared the nuns of Port Royal des Champs deprived of any votes ; and called on the seven nuns of Port Royal de Paris, to proceed to an election. Meanwhile the S. Dorothee, very inferior in capacity to the S. Flavie, gradually became wearied of being the tool of her ambitious sister. Nay even the nuns she had overawed to her purposes dreaded the S. Flavie's intriguing, overbearing, and meddling spirit ; and the archbishop himself, who had so often had recourse to her services, had now seen sufficiently of her character to think it would be more conducive to peace to place no more power in her hands. So that as the time of this unjust election drew nigh, the S. Flavie was astonished to find her tool, the S. Dorothee, whose mediocrity she had so long despised, named as her rival ; and instead of continuing subservient, using every means to thwart her, and bear away the triumph on which she had so long set her heart ; to obtain which, she had committed so many crimes, and acted so treacherous a part. Thus did the phantom elude her grasp, for which she had for years practised a course of calumnious and double dealing ; for which

she had immured in a close prison, and deprived of all the comforts of life, some of the most excellent of the earth, to whom she owed her bread ; for which she had succeeded in wresting from them their possessions, and caused them an imprisonment, the severity of which had occasioned a pestilential disease, in which many had died, persecuted by her until death, and deprived of the sacraments of their church.

Accordingly, when the election took place, the S. Dorothée Perdreau was unanimously chosen abbess. And thus the reward of all the S. Flavie's treachery, was to find herself fixed under the absolute domination of her own tool ; a person she cordially despised, and who hated her for her former tyranny ; a woman equally weak and obstinate ; who like many others of that description, had no greater pleasure than in wreaking her vengeance upon her by every sort of petty mortification. And instead of finding a friend in the archbishop, he informed her in the most cool manner, that he had never entertained the least thought of making her abbess, for which her intriguing character entirely disqualified her. Thus did she find herself completely over-reached : and all the pains she had taken in surreptitiously abstracting furniture and moveables from the monastery of Port Royal des Champs, only served to aggrandize her bitterest personal enemy. When she reproached the archbishop and the ecclesiastics, telling them it was by her unwearied industry and cleverness alone, that they had gained their point, they coolly replied, " Many may profit by treachery, but all abhor the traitor." Such was the only comfort this poor sister obtained from her friends.

Meantime the S. Dorothée was as much elated, as the S. Flavie was cast down. She usurped the place of abbess with a high hand and the assumed importance which weak minds attach to honours. On the very day of her election she admitted six new postulants, collected with great pains by the archbishop ; but the next day, when their instruction was to commence, she found herself strangely at a loss ; knowing nothing either of latin or of the principles of music. She was then obliged with much shame to call in a vicar of Notre Dame, to instruct them ; and it was with the greatest difficulty, at the festival held on her inauguration, which succeeded a few weeks after her election, that a motet was most wretchedly performed, to the derision of all Paris, whom the arch-

bishop had unadvisedly invited to grace the ceremony. Meantime the S. Dorothée, finding herself rather at a loss in the duties of an abbess, thought it necessary to veil her deficiencies by surrounding herself with all the pomp which could be assumed. She therefore had state apartments fitted up for herself; kept a separate table, and in every respect took upon herself all the honours that could be arrogated by a titled abbess. Meanwhile, the S. Flavie Passart continually acted as a thorn in her sides, using every means to render her despicable and ridiculous in the eyes of her new community. The abbess Dorothée on the other hand, knowing by experience her intriguing spirit, began to fear lest she might in turn prove the victim of similar plots, to those in which she had been a tool; and in order to watch over the S. Flavie, she stationed herself at the turn, to scrutinize all that went in and out of the monastery; nor did she at all seem to consider how derogatory was such a mode of proceeding to her station as abbess; nor the derision and contempt to which this strange mixture of state and meanness exposed her. From day to day, the new abbess seemed more and more perplexed. Wholly inadequate to the duties of her office: hated by the only person of talent in the community, who, as her unsuccessful rival, spent her whole endeavours in tormenting her; unable to enforce discipline; now trying to obtain respect by unwonted state; now meanly watching lest plots should be formed against her; alternately treating her community with harshness, and vainly conceding every thing in order to conciliate: such was the life of this wretched woman. Meanwhile, the S. Flavie's state was no less miserable. Outwitted by the ecclesiastics, whose dupe she had become; and by the stupid S. Dorothée, her own tool; hated by the whole little community she had by her artifices gained over, but who with one voice reproached her for the thralldom into which she had led them, and who were obedient to the S. Dorothée, only in tormenting her; she was yet worse used by the abbess, whom she so heartily despised, than by any of the others. Her high spirit was completely borne down, and she was reduced to such a state, that she did little but weep from morning till night. Yet she was not happy enough to see the hand of God, and to recognize that it was a just punishment for all her prevarications and her treachery; or rather a warning voice, to lead her to repen-

tance. She had imprisoned her mothers and her sisters ; she was the cause of turning out her legitimate superiors and benefactors ; and the just God to whom vengeance belongeth, and who punishes men by their own crimes, permitted her, by her own machinations, to throw herself into a thralldom, and under the dominion of one who became her scourge. Three, out of the seven nuns who had joined the Sœurs Flavie and Dorothée, were so miserable under this tyranny, and so tortured by remorse, that they found means to interest their relations at court for their emancipation ; and obtained a mandate for their return to Port Royal des Champs. The others, who were of less note, were less fortunate ; though equally wishing their escape. Meanwhile the greatest dilapidations took place in the revenues of Port Royal de Paris. The abbess, to conciliate the public and to unite her refractory community, was continually giving magnificent entertainments ; nay she even gave a ball in the exterior of the convent. The disorder of their finances, urged them to fresh pursuits against Port Royal des Champs ; but after much litigation on the part of the clergy, the king refused to ratify their unjust claim, saying, "If Port Royal de Paris chooses to give a ball, Port Royal des Champs shall not be taxed to find fiddles."

We will close this chapter by contrasting the doctrine of implicit obedience, as exemplified in a conversation with the S. Flavie, with the spirit of Port Royal, as displayed in extracts from a letter by M. de St. Marthe.

The S. Angélique de St. Alexis is giving an account of a conversation between the S. Flavie Passart, after she had thrown off the mask, and herself. 'After having spoken for a considerable time on the duty of implicit obedience, she added "that for her part, she was in the disposition of obeying without any distinction or discernment at all ; and without ever making any reflection, whether the commandment of her ecclesiastical superior were good or bad, because she ought not to pre-suppose, that he would give her any order which was not conformable with what God required." Upon which I proposed to her the following question, "My sister, if after the death of his grace the present archbishop, another arose in his place, who commanded you to condemn him, or to sign a formulary, declaring the whole of his present conduct to have been unjust and arbitrary, that he was a violent and time-

serving man, one who abused his ecclesiastical prerogative, in requiring the signature of a formulary which is no article of christian faith ; and that moreover, you yourself had committed a still greater crime, in upholding him by your signature : would you sign such a declaration ? ” She answered, “ Yes, my sister, I would sign it with all my heart, because I am resolved always to obey my superiors, and it is not my business to discern what they command ; it is their concern to enquire if what they do, and command to be done, be right or wrong ; but my only part is to yield them implicit and prompt obedience, nor can I sin in obeying them. ” “ But, my sister, ” rejoined I, “ supposing there arose five or six archbishops of Paris, one after the other, each of whom in his turn, commanded you to undo and condemn the act his predecessor had ordered you to perform and to approve, what would you then do ? ” She replied, “ My sister, if fifty archbishops of Paris succeeded each other, I should always obey the command of the one in office. ” I answered, “ But, my sister, what then is your foundation ? it is not God, for you serve other Lords before him ; nor are you led by the Spirit of God, for God has no variableness nor shadow of turning ; whilst on the contrary you are ready to change with every wind of doctrine ; a sure test of those who rest on frail man, instead of the immutable Lord ; and who follow false teachers instead of the Spirit of truth, the appointed teacher of the church. ” She answered, “ I hold to perfect obedience, and that is all. ” With these words she went away ; whilst I answered, “ Would it not be well, my sister, not merely to hold *perfect obedience* ; but to see, that this *perfect obedience*, be yielded to God and not to man ? ”

The difference of sentiment between the creatures of the court party, under the dominion of the Jesuits, and the Port Royalists, on these subjects, will plainly appear by the following letter, from one of their venerable confessors.

“ My Sisters, ”

January, 1664.

Do not fear all the threats which may be made concerning briefs and bulles, or all the mandates you may receive, whether by the authority of the pope, or that of his grace the archbishop. St. Paul says, “ *The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and*

of faith unfeigned. I Tim. i. 5. If then you have every reason to believe this commandment to be contrary to charity, and if you recognise that it does *not* lead to purity of heart, and that it does *not* accord with a good conscience, and that it does *not* spring from a faith unfeigned; how should you imagine you ought to conform to it; a lively faith is inseparable from purity of heart, and from a good conscience, as the Apostle says. Never forget that you will soon weaken yourselves in the faith, if you neglect purity of heart, and if you sacrifice a good conscience. * * * Hence, my very dear sisters, very far from fearing excommunication so long as you remain faithful to the dictates of conscience, you ought on the contrary to fear lest God should abandon you if you should be unfaithful; and lest he should punish you, by allowing you to fall into errors against the faith. * * * Now it is written, *that all things shall work together for good, to those who love God*; that is to say, to those who preserve themselves in this purity of heart and love: and all that can be done to those who really abide in these divine virtues, cannot injure them; but on the contrary, we are assured by revelation that all must work together for their good.

‘Moreover, my dear sisters, let us console ourselves in the Lord; and in a sure trust that he will not abandon us. The persecution you suffer places you in the rank of the early christians; and be willing, and think yourselves honoured, in being called to partake of the same sort of sufferings they endured. For believe me, it was to them a deep suffering to have the sorrow of seeing their brethren fall; you must expect similar trials; but let us seek to imitate them, in their firm and humble faith. If these things humble us, in making us enter into a feeling sense of our own nothingness, surely they likewise fortify us, since there is no other strength, than that which is founded on that deep self-abasement and humility, which may lead us to dig deep, and build upon the Rock of ages himself. * * *

‘The name of a prison appears indeed horrible; but if the Holy Spirit abide there with us, he will bestow on us the liberty of the children of God. If truth enter with us and increase in us, it will deliver us more and more from the father of lies. If for Christ’s sake, we are as it were slaves of the injustice of men, we shall have the consolation of seeing the chains of our

sins broken, and thus become the freemen of God. The wicked carry their prison about with them wherever they go ; because their own heart is a dark dungeon, their passions adamantine chains, and scourges to the soul ; whilst on the contrary, those whom Jesus Christ has delivered, and who have renounced the world, experience the liberty of the children of God, even in the midst of bonds. *Jesus Christ is come a light into the world ;* and those unhappy persons who love the world, and prefer darkness to light, have their eyes so blinded by earthly mists, that whilst persecuting the children of God, they cannot see the gulph which yawns beneath their own feet ; their heads are so intoxicated with worldly pursuits, that they are insensible of the dizzy height on which they stand, till their feet slide, they are dashed from precipice to precipice, and the abyss finally closes over them. Whereas if the eye be single, Christ will be a light amidst the darkness of the most gloomy dungeons. Let us then believe, that the happiest spot for the christian is not always that which to sense appears brightest ; but rather that in which he is the most frequently compelled to cast himself upon the strength of God only ; and where outward circumstances, by affording him the most frequent exercises of humility, charity, and patience, yield him most facilities for practising the tempers, and receiving the impress of the likeness of his divine master. * * *

‘Whilst however you maintain love for your persecutors, be not shaken from your stedfastness, either by their mistakes or subtleties. A disciple, thanks be to God, is not called to waste his time and strength in unraveling the long and intricate web of sophisms, elaborated by false teachers ; the test applied by our Saviour is simple and compendious, *‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’* When spiritual teachers resort to courses of conduct and proselytism, not only unprecedented in scripture, but wholly opposed to that practised by the apostles ; we have solid ground for believing that the doctrines themselves, which demand so different a method of promulgation, must also be different. Now the apostles never resorted to force, or to any *worldly* incitement either of pleasure or pain, to compel the will. They never *persecuted* nor *flattered* the world, to make it renounce its errors ; but they suffered the persecution of the world from those errors. In the case both

of the great Shepherd himself, and of those immediately sent forth by him, they laid down their lives for the sheep : but it is without example to find shepherds commissioned by Christ slaying their sheep, under the pretext of exercising the charge of lawful pastors. Beware then of the doctrines of those whose practice is so wholly opposed to that of the Lord they profess to serve. Such practices are those the world was wont to use against the church, not those of the church against the world. Now neither the world nor the church change their natures. Where then we see worldly practices resorted to, we may safely conclude that it is not the spirit of Christ, but that of the world in disguise which has crept in it, which is the agent ; and that for the gratification of its own purposes, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, she is for a time assuming the mask of that church, to whose vitality and spirit she is the most deadly and irreconcilable enemy.

'God is just in all his judgments, and what we suffer both is, and when seen truly *seems* to us far less than we deserve. We ought to esteem ourselves too happy, that though in the midst of the furnace he sustains us ; whereas those truly to be pitied are the unhappy persons who being delivered over to the blindness of the natural understanding and impenitence of the natural heart, persecute the Church of God. And if he permits some of your sisters to fall, while you stand, let no one glorify herself on that account ; but seeing her own danger, in the lapse of those who once walked with her as fellow pilgrims, let her cleave more closely to the Lord, and *if she thinketh she standeth, take heed lest she fall.* * * *

'Do not be terrified, do not be troubled. And with the knowledge and light it has pleased God to afford you, whether briefs are handed you, or bulles fulminated against you ; whether discourses are held to terrify you, or casuistic subtleties to ensnare you ; or although those who mislead you boast that they are led by the spirit of God ; do not be astonished, for the apostle predicted that all these things would happen. But then he adds at the same time that they should succeed only against those who should perish, and who had not received the love of the truth in their hearts. By which he marks, that there can be no salvation independently of a love of the truth, which is the bond of all true faith, and living charity.

‘Thank God, that he has vouchsafed to choose you as the first victims of this persecution against his truth ; thank him that he has bestowed on you that knowledge of the truth, now so rare, which may render you a blessing to his church ; and that he has crowned it with those persecutions which may issue in your own sanctification, and in the glorification of your Redeemer. This grace is so great, that we cannot be sufficiently thankful for it ; and we are wholly unworthy of such a favour, if we do not appreciate his having called us to a participation of his sufferings. Let us then abide firmly, by a thankful humility, in the state to which he has called us. And now, may the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace, even that peace in believing, which passes all understanding ; and which as the world cannot give, so neither can it take away.’

‘It remains to say something of my own disposition, that you may pray God for me. God knows my weakness, which is no doubt the reason he has not yet appointed me to severe combats. However, whenever he sees fit to call me out, I trust he will become my strength. If I have not been found worthy to give you the first an example, I trust I shall be enabled to follow yours ; and as you have been ready to lay down your lives for the truth, I am encouraged to hope, that I too may be ready to lay down mine for you.

‘We seem to me just now placed very much in a similar predicament to that of the church in the time of the emperor Julian. This apostate caused his statue to be erected in a place of public resort, and in the midst of several idols. Now soldiers were required in passing, to salute the image of the emperor. Christian soldiers then found themselves in a double difficulty : if they saluted the emperor, they passed for idolaters, and were cast out by the Christians : if they refused, they were executed by the magistrate ; not as christians, but traitors to the emperor.

Yours, my dear sisters, in our Lord,

With much consideration,

ST. MARTHE.’

CHAPTER X.

Account of the return of the S. Angélique de St. Jean, and of the other exiled nuns. Their imprisonment at Port Royal des Champs.

‘I had fully persuaded myself,’ writes the S. Angélique de St. Jean, ‘that our long exile would terminate in the tomb, when on the fourth of July, at nine in the morning, the abbess, Mde. de Rantzau, came to pay me a visit, and told me with a joyful countenance that she brought me good news ; and that the Abbé de la Motte was just come from the archbishop, to know if I should like to visit the M. Agnès at the monastery of St. Mary, from which I might perhaps return to Port Royal des Champs. My astonishment was almost beyond belief : so that I could only say, that I was ready for whatsoever the will of God appointed ; for the news seemed so bright, that I feared to believe it ; supposing it was a snare to enhance our disappointment, and fearing lest its bitterness should prove an occasion of falling. After dinner, she returned to sit with me, and shewed me the greatest affection, saying with tears in her eyes how wretched it was to have been compelled to become my jailor ; and rejoicing in the hope of shewing me every kindness, as long as I might yet stay. I thanked the community for all the kindness they had shewn me : at which those present blushed ; but I am sensible they did all their orders allowed. As I knew they had long wished to learn modeling in wax, I offered, now they had liberty to converse with me, to teach them the art. And as I had many preparations to make for my return, I determined to sit up all night to arrange my own concerns, that I might be at liberty to give them this pleasure next day. This day I devoted to finishing a reliquary I had begun for them ; and to making them a wax crucifix, which I did not finish till nine at night, when I retired to my cell to pray and to say complin ; after

which I proposed making my little preparations, which I had scarcely begun when I heard many footsteps approaching my room. The hour had long since struck, at which the nuns go to bed in summer. I could not imagine what it could be ; when the door opened, and the abbess appeared, holding a candle in one hand and a paper in the other. I rose to meet her, when she said with great surprise (and I think feeling,) "My sister, an almoner of the archbishop is just arrived with a coach, and here is his order to convey you away immediately." I confess I was not a little surprised at being sent for at such an unseasonable hour. I made haste to collect my papers and clothes. In the mean time, the officers of the monastery who were already in bed, very kindly rose to bid me farewell, and notwithstanding all my remonstrances they would accompany me to the door. When I entered the court, they saw it was already dark, and they did not like to allow me to traverse the streets of Paris at such an hour. The abbess begged me to enter into the choir, whilst she went to the ecclesiastic who was to accompany me, to request him to defer my departure till morning. I then entered the choir and prostrating myself anew in spirit before the good shepherd, under whose care I had placed myself at the beginning of my exile, I said with all my heart 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me !' There are indeed many darknesses to be feared in this life, far more terrible than external darkness, through which we may nevertheless walk with assurance of not falling, when his grace accompanies us ! Soon afterwards the mother called me, and said that there was no way of deferring it, for the archbishop insisted on my going immediately. She then said how sorry she should be to part from me. I threw myself at her feet, and begged her pardon and that of the community for any trouble I might have given them. She embraced me with the utmost tenderness and affection, as did likewise all the other nuns. They then opened the door. An ecclesiastic and a female received me, and I stepped into the carriage with them. I knew where I was going, but was unacquainted with the road ; nor could I discover where we were, for it was pitch dark, and there were no lights excepting here and there a candle in the shops we occasionally passed. When we had proceeded a little way, the coach stopped. The ecclesiastic

got out. I perceived we were at the gate of a convent, and I concluded he was about to bring me a companion : but as I did not know in what part of Paris I was, it was impossible to guess who it might be. We waited above three quarters of an hour. Not a word had yet been spoken by any of the party. At length the lady broke silence by observing that it was a very undue hour to conduct nuns, but that it could not be otherwise, as the archbishop returned so late from St. Germain. I replied, "Madame, it is but fit that nuns should be as ready at all hours to obey the will of God, as their ecclesiastical superiors are to obey the will of the court." "Alas, Madame," replied she, "few except the inhabitants of Port Royal could suffer so much, so cheerfully." She then embraced the opportunity of the ecclesiastic's absence to say, that it was well known no other persons would have endured so much with so much constancy, and that whatever the court party might do, the world at large espoused our cause. I cut short this discourse, wishing to spend the time in silence and prayer, for which I had full leisure. At length, the moon rising in cloudless majesty in the heavens, and her peaceful light gilding the silent and solitary streets, I could not but recollect that beautiful promise of God that "the sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night ;" I felt that he had preserved me from evil, and above all that he had preserved my soul ; and I trusted that he who had watched over my going out, would also sustain me by his grace in my going in, and that from this time forth and even for evermore.

After waiting for a very long time, the ecclesiastic returned ; accompanied by a nun, whom he seated in the carriage beside me. It was too dark to recognize either her countenance or figure : but I had no time to doubt who it might be, for she threw herself on my neck, exclaiming, "O my dear aunt !" I replied, "My dear child !" This was all we spoke at this interview and during the whole way, but these few words from the abundance of the heart, sufficed to make us know each other, and to fill our hearts with consolation ; of which the first principle being spiritual, though it was also natural, was first to be enjoyed in gratitude and silence before him who was its first object and its true cause. This experience made me understand, what Mary Magdalene felt at hearing herself called by her name by Jesus Christ, whom she took to be the

gardener, and the answer which she made, in saying the single word "Rabboni!" Certainly this mutual recognition includes all in a truly spiritual friendship. How often the multiplicity of demonstrations and of words injures the principle of true joy and satisfaction, by troubling the heart and disturbing the action of thanksgiving, which should be first rendered to God, in order to consecrate wholly to him the first fruits of a rich harvest sown in so many tears. Then indeed I began to feel my heart overflow with joy. I had before both supposed the news of our liberation doubtful, and also feared lest I might learn that some of my sisters had fallen through the severity of our persecution, and the rigour of their confinement: but the joy at once more meeting that dear child, whom God had sustained in a trial so terrible, especially at her tender age, inspired me with such good hopes that all my fears vanished, and I only thought of praising God, who gave us such sweet earnest of his great mercy, and who began to bind up our wounds by restoring us to each other.

'The remainder of our journey was very long, or rather tedious. We were six in number; we felt almost suffocated with heat, in our serge religious dresses, and shut up in the month of July in a coach, all the windows of which were closed. The night seemed darker and darker as the hour became later, and the candles in the shops were extinguished. We had neither flambeau nor lantern; and in many places it was so completely dark, that we all fully expected we should be overturned every moment. I searched my own heart to discover if I felt any alarm; but it seemed to me a folly and contradiction to dread anything, when the conscience has no reason to fear death. For if we had been overturned, or murdered by the banditti who at this time infested Paris, we should have died as certainly in obedience to the appointment of God, as those martyrs whose death is so much more glorious before men. After all, true peace must consist in peace of conscience. The true Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, is the only light which no outward storms and tempests can extinguish. When that Light is burning, the wise virgins need not fear the obscurity of night; nor will the lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, be able to gain advantage over them; whereas when the oil of interior peace is wanting to a soul, because of

unfaithfulness to God, it trembles, even when there is no ground of anxiety;—the darkness of her conscience at one and the same time leading her to fear men; yet rendering her insensible to the tremendous danger of offending that God, in whose hands are the lives of all his creatures.

‘ Thus we proceeded, each silently conversing with God in her heart during the whole way; which was prolonged to two hours and a half, because we both proceeded slowly, and met with several tedious detentions. For when we reached the gates of the city, we found them shut, and were obliged to wait till they were opened, which detained us some time. We were again kept waiting much longer at the gate of the convent of St. Mary in the suburb, where we had to remain above half an hour, before the turn-keepers of the convent were roused from their slumbers; after which they had to wake the nuns, before they could get at the keys of the outward gate, leading from the street into the exterior court of the monastery. Whilst we waited, I unexpectedly heard a bell which I immediately recognized as that of the Carthusians, which struck the second stroke for matins; that is, it was eleven o’clock at night. I cannot describe my joy at hearing this bell, which I had so often heard in our house at Paris, and at thus discovering that I was in the immediate vicinity of our poor desolate Zion; of which I had neither seen nor heard any thing during the time of captivity in which I wept by the streams of Babylon. After a considerable time had elapsed, the great gate was opened; and the carriage drove into the court of St. Mary’s, where we had another long station to perform. For the nuns, who had not the least expectation of our arrival at such an hour, were not so soon ready to receive us; and being all in bed and asleep, it required some time to dress, for they do not sleep in their clothes, as we do. At length they made their appearance; so that just before midnight struck, and before the day of the visitation ended, they received this extraordinary midnight visit; the pleasure of which was greater to us than to them, though we must bear full testimony to their great charity, and the lively interest they manifested in the extreme joy of their prisoners at this emancipation. It was the mother superior herself, and five or six other nuns who came to meet us at the door. So many events and so many feelings crowded on the heart and mind,

that I cannot in the least recollect what either party said or did ; I only know, that all which the kindest hearts can exhibit of sympathy and joy in the happiness of others, these good mothers abundantly shewed ; and indeed they exhibited much more joy than I did, my own heart being troubled with conflicting hopes and fears, as to what might follow, and the state in which we might meet our exiled sisters. But all my suspense vanished. I forgot all thoughts of bonds and imprisonment when I beheld our two sisters, who were imprisoned in this convent, freed and running to meet us at the door. It was not till after I embraced them, that I learnt that one of them was actually then suffering from a fever, (though she quitted her bed to see us,) and that our dear and venerable M. Agnès, was altogether confined to her bed, through the hardships and deprivations and anxieties undergone in the long period of their imprisonment. I seemed at once to receive from God an hundred-fold for all we had endured ; and I longed to go up to the M. Agnès, who was looking forward with equal pleasure to once more seeing me her niece.

'We first however, went to the altar, to pour out our hearts in mutual thanksgivings ; for how could we ever sufficiently thank that good Shepherd, who, not satisfied with pouring out his life for us, had guided and watched over us during our captivity, and who had now sought us, and reunited us to each other. From the church we went up to the room of the M. Agnès, who received me with a joy, like that with which holy angels receive souls escaped from the snares of the evil one, and let loose from the prison of this world. I shall not attempt to relate either her feelings or my own, for no words can convey them adequately. The good mother of St. Mary took a sisterly part in our joy ; but after a little while very kindly left us to pour out our hearts to each other in full liberty. They wished however first to prepare us beds, but I told them, that I had already taken measures to stay up all night, before I knew I should spend the night in their house ; and my sister Madeleine Christine said she should also sit up.

'It was past midnight, and these good mothers knew we were to set out very early for Port Royal des Champs ; so that we had only just time to exchange greetings, and to realize our reunion. Indeed it was like a dream. I sat a little with the M. Agnès, but did not stay, for at her great

age, sleep and rest were absolutely necessary ; but I found her so full of grace and strength, that after my long anguish at our separation, and all the false reports circulated about her which had torn my heart, it was indeed a deliverance. After bidding her a good night, it was the turn of my other sisters to speak. They both crowded round me, and told me all that had befallen them, their persecutions, deprivations, and the support they had received. From them, I first received the joyful tidings of the firmness of our sisters ; of the constancy and noble conduct of my companion, the S. Madeleine Christine, of which I knew not a word ; of the constancy and generosity of our holy bishops ; above all of the Bishop of Alêt, who amongst others my persecutors had tried by every means to make me believe had abandoned the truth and was armed against us. Then news was first told me of the multitude of our friends, whom God had not only preserved in the truth, but had raised up to defend it, and to justify our innocence by public apologies. On hearing these joyful tidings of multitudes whom I had been falsely told had fallen, with a view to shake me ; and after having long imagined like Elijah that I alone was left to worship the God of our fathers ; my heart was overwhelmed with joy, as when the Prophet learned how many had not bowed the knee to Baal. But I could say nothing, except to God ; and tears of joy and thankfulness alone shewed the almost painful excess of delight at his great goodness, in having not only reunited us, but preserved our souls. I was so overwhelmed, that at every new tidings, I was ready to say, It is enough ! for it seemed more than my frame could bear. For all was as new to me, as though I were risen from a sepulchre, after being buried in profound solitude for ten months ; and my sisters could not refrain from tears, when they found how rigorous my captivity had been. So that I resembled those poor christian slaves, liberated from the Turks, who are aware of nothing in returning to their own country, but have to learn all that has taken place since. As for me, I knew nothing, not even the most public pieces of news ; indeed things almost forgotten by the public were new to me. I knew nothing of the establishment of strange nuns in Port Royal des Champs, nor of the horrible conduct of the S. Flavie, nor that Port Royal de Paris was wrested from us, and erected into a new monastery. Yet

amidst these news of temporal losses, was the rich recompense of learning the spiritual strength and health of my dear sisters ; so that I seemed borne down with the full tide of blessings, and I knew not how to be thankful enough, that I had been sustained under the false information continually brought me, of the defection of those amongst our sisters and mothers whom we most valued.

‘Completely overpowered by these conflicting feelings, I consented, as I was importunately urged, to lie down a little ; not that it would have been possible to sleep, but I needed to breathe a little, and to pour out my heart to God in silence, as a necessary relief in the overwhelming riches of natural and spiritual joy he had heaped upon me ; so that the presence even of the most dearly loved and newly restored friends seemed almost a restraint, till I had poured out the fulness of thanksgiving to him who is above all friends. I accordingly threw myself on a bed which the kindness of the mothers had prepared, and rested for about three quarters of an hour ; after which I rose and hastened to write a few hurried lines to the various dear and tried and faithful friends who had done so much for us, and borne so much with us, to acquaint them with the joyful news of our deliverance.

‘Meanwhile my S. Angélique Thérèse, who had a feverish complaint, and our dear M. Agnès slept, and my S. Madeleine Christine was employed in packing for them. After this, we all said matins together ; and I know not how it was, but there was not one word in the office, which did not seem chosen expressly for us ; as if to lead us to praise the mercies of God, which indeed seemed in one tide to fill and overflow all our hearts and souls and senses.

‘Day soon came, as I was still writing ; when the nun who attended the M. Agnès came to ask how we were, and to invite her new guests to see the house and gardens of the convent, which are particularly beautiful, and which they took us to see thus early, thinking we might be sent for. In short they seemed by every civility and kindness in their power to shew the great affection and esteem they felt for us, and truly joyful they were at being emancipated from the odious task of being our jailors. They took us to visit their cloisters, the chapter house, the community room, the refectory, and their kitchen. All are very handsome, in excellent order, and

as much ornamented as may be allowable in a religious house. We afterwards proceeded to the garden, in which is a calvary and a magnificent sepulchre. We had not however leisure to stay there long; for we almost immediately heard the bell of the turn ring loudly, and a messenger appeared to inform us that an almoner of the archbishop had arrived, to escort us immediately. The carriage, he added, was waiting; and as no time was to be lost, we were commanded to come without the least delay. It was then half-past five in the morning, and the M. Agnès had not yet risen. She however rose hastily, and came down immediately; for they allowed us no time to take leave of any person, except the few nuns who happened to be at that moment accompanying us. The M. Superior, who had very kindly prepared breakfast for us in the refectory, constrained us however to take some refreshment. We then took leave, on both sides with every mark of affection and civility; and I who had only been with them six hours, had more thanks to give than the others; having received nothing from them but the most attentive kindness and sympathy. Our sisters who had been imprisoned there, had indeed other treatment to remember; but they too had every reason to think it was as painful for these mothers to inflict as for them to suffer.

The M. Agnès then entered the coach with her four daughters accompanied by a turn-keeper of St. Mary's. The almoner of the archbishop escorted us on horseback. We began our journey by saying prime together. The office being ended, I pulled out a little bible, bound in one volume, which I always carry about me; and handed it to the M. Agnès, who opened it to see what it would please God to give us. These are the words which presented themselves; and which he declared to his church by one of his prophets, who perhaps saw *us* in spirit, amongst the vast flock, ransomed by the blood of the divine and good Shepherd:—"Woe to those shepherds, who destroy and tear the flock of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore, doth the LORD, who is God of Israel, say to those shepherds who lead my people, Ye have dispersed my flock, ye have driven them out, and ye have not visited them. But as for me, I will visit on you the malice of your hearts; and I will assemble the remnants of my flock, from all the places where you have dispersed them; I will bring

them back to their own house ; [in our case, Port Royal des Champs] and they shall grow and shall multiply. I will establish over them pastors, who shall guide them ; they shall no longer apprehend any thing, or have fear, nor shall any one of their number perish."

'Can any one who believes in a particular providence, doubt that every, even the most trivial circumstance, is not fortuitous ? Who, in the whole range of the old and new testament, could have discovered a passage more literally applicable to what had already passed in our community and to the present occasion of our return ? We did indeed feel that God was now beginning, by our restoration to Port Royal des Champs, to assemble the remnant of his flock ; that is, all who through his mercy had escaped from so many perils and temptations, by the power of his grace which alone had rendered them steadfast and immoveable. Those also, who had for a time fallen under the power of the enemy, had been snatched from his hands by that good Shepherd, who does not allow one of his sheep to perish which the Father has given into his hand. Oh how great is the strength and protection of his grace, to them who look to him only !

'After proceeding a little more than two miles, it appeared that one of the horses had lost a shoe which made him go lame. We were however obliged to proceed at a foot pace, as far as Chatillon, to the nearest blacksmith. There we were detained a considerable time, which at first appeared a very unseasonable interruption ; but we soon found in this little circumstance, as in many others more important, that what retarded our journey, enhanced our joy. For in the mean time our other sisters who had been exiled in different houses in Paris, and as it appeared, had set out rather later than ourselves, had time to join us. When we unexpectedly perceived the first carriage near at hand, and all the white dresses and bright scarlet crosses, which shewed in the winding of the road a little way behind, it is impossible to describe the transports of joy of both parties. As we were stationary, the carriage soon overtook us, and passed on ten or fifteen paces before us. All we could do, as it drove quickly by, was to salute each other with a mutual exclamation of joy, which came from the inmost heart, and which could not be suppressed. This carriage was followed by another, and then another,

and another, so that there were in all seven. They drove by so fast that we could only distinguish those who sat next the door on our side ; for though they longed equally with ourselves to have some communication, M. le Madre, who escorted them on horseback as the prisoners of the archbishop, would by no means suffer it ; and ordered all the carriages to file on before us, excepting the last, which counting ours, made the seventh. This carriage always remained behind, and stopped to wait for us, which it did the whole way, for we had very poor horses ; and although it might have continually passed us, it always remained to bring up the rear, going on and stopping just as we did ; the mystery of which we did not then penetrate, not knowing whom it contained.

‘We then proceeded, still forming a file of seven coaches. It was a delightful procession ; for every one who formed a part of it praised God, and followed the cross of Christ. Thus we went on, without meeting, till we passed Jouy : where at the brow of the hill, we first descried the spire of our beloved Zion, so deeply mourned, so long and so earnestly desired ! Here, the road being difficult, at the long and steep descent to the abbey, the carriages drew near ours ; and here it was we first saw and spoke to each other for one little moment : but what could be said in such transports of joy ? I know not to what to compare the spectacle of the sisters standing up in their carriages, stretching out their hands to each other, and making exclamations of joy at the sight of the M. Agnès whom they had so often been threatened they should never behold again ; and seeing me amongst them, after the feeble expectation they entertained that I should ever be allowed to return. It put me in mind of the resurrection from the dead, as our close and weary solitary imprisonment had done of their long sepulture. But after the first confused exclamations, the first intelligible words that could be heard were praises and thanksgivings to God, who had so mercifully sustained us in steadfast fidelity to the testimony of his truth ; and who already repaired our sufferings an hundred fold by the great joy of this reunion. It was indeed of all consolations the greatest we could desire after our cruel separation. It was yet an enhancement of happiness, as we from time to time glimpsed amongst the number of our sisters at those whom we best loved, or those whom we thought they would certainly

have withheld from us. Especially when I saw my sister Candide le Cerf, and afterwards my sister Anne Gertrude, I knew not in what words to pour out my heart to God, for this triumph of grace, unless in the words of the Prophet, "Let them say so, who are redeemed by the Lord, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and hath gathered them together out of the lands." Since both we ourselves, and our sisters were so overpowered with mercies; whether those he had preserved, or those he had brought back; it seemed as though we were all so melted into one heart and mind, that we could not return separate actions of thanks; but that God had thus reunited us again, that we might with *one* heart and mind sing one full anthem of praise, thanksgiving, blessing, and gratitude, for mercies every one of which seemed equally to belong to the whole; since every member alike belongs to the body of which it is a part, and since to him alone each and all are indebted for every thing they have and are.

'We indeed felt so happy as almost to forget we were yet prisoners, in the pleasure of being reunited. We were however soon reminded of it, for when we descended the brow of our hill, which formerly used to be lined with the peasantry, the tenants in their festival attire holding their children, and the poor; all was silent and solitary. The cheerful sound of bells, and the sight of blazing bonfires in all directions, no longer greeted our eyes and ears, as when the M. Angélique arrived in days that were past. As our unattended procession drove up to the great door, two of our faithful grey-headed old servants only came to meet us with tears in their eyes; and on looking up we found all the doors guarded by strangers, the creatures of the archbishop; and we were told that the last carriage which accompanied us contained his grand vicar, official, and another ecclesiastic. It was indeed a damp to us, to discover we only exchanged separate prisons in foreign houses, for an imprisonment in our own house; yet the joy of meeting was so great, that it in truth overpowered every other feeling. Each carriage successively stopped at the door of the great court; and with one heart and one accord, we spontaneously moved towards the grand portal of the church; and in one instant that large and ancient Gothic pile was filled by our company, who by the white colour of their dresses and

scarlet crosses seemed to mark that they too were amongst the innumerable multitudes, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb in which their crosses were dyed. We prostrated ourselves with one accord at the feet of that good Shepherd, who thus reassembled his dispersed sheep. He alone saw the movement of the hearts of each ; and perhaps in that glad moment they were all alike. There were thirty six of us who, having been redeemed from our hopeless captivity, were now returned, and about to rejoin their company left in this house of Port Royal des Champs. Those who abode faithful in Port Royal de Paris, were expected to arrive on the morrow. That is our whole community, excepting seven out of our whole number of ninety eight :—*viz.* eighty four choir nuns, and eighteen lay sisters. So that though bereft of our house of Paris, and of one third of our revenue ; we rejoiced that henceforth, we should altogether form one unleavened bread, without malice, and in sincerity and truth ; and thus be able to present our whole body, one living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord.

Soon after, the M. Prioress with the whole community, who had been expecting us with the impatience which may be imagined, came to open the door of the sacraments, which leads from the exterior part of the church, open to the public, in which we then were, into the monastic enclosure. The venerable M. Agnès first rose from the steps before the rail of the altar, where she was kneeling. We with one accord fell back that she might lead the way ; for though great age and fatigue made her steps feeble, yet we followed, as sheep follow the steps of the aged shepherd who has long and tenderly and faithfully conducted them. The grand vicar and the officers conducted us to the door of the enclosure, and never did captives feel so blessed a sense of joy and liberty, as we did, when the well known monastic door of that beloved Zion, where we had spent so many blessed hours, closed behind us and restored us to all we loved and held sacred. It is in vain to express the natural joy of both parties ; but it may be best imagined by those who know what perfect christian union and friendship is, and who can picture to themselves what we had suffered for a whole year. One party had just been rescued from a horrible solitary captivity, where each had as it were been buried alive ; in which all they loved in

the world became as it were dead to them, and they were constantly terrified by cruel threats, and by false news, invented to shake their constancy and to perplex their conscience; whilst they were destitute, in many instances, of the necessary comforts of life. The other had been torn by the loss of thirty-six of their mothers and sisters, and the treachery of some of their own number, without being able to ascertain who or how many were guilty; also by the loss of their goods, the domination of strangers, and the endeavour to sow disunion amongst them; whilst the most terrible threats were constantly resorted to, and every door was guarded, to prevent any communication with friends and advisers without. Those I say, who can realize all these trials, may perhaps form some idea of our thankfulness and joy, at embracing each other; and recounting our various histories on that blessed and joyful and most memorable day, which we were continually interrupting by tears and thanksgivings to God, who had so unexpectedly encompassed us about with songs of deliverance.'

The S. Angélique was soon after chosen abbess, and the community flattered themselves with the hope of a peaceful enjoyment of their beloved seclusion. In this hope they were mistaken. The house was immediately surrounded by an armed guard, sentries being placed at every door. They were forbidden from even taking the air in their own gardens. They were deprived of their ministers; interdicted the sacraments; and declared rebels and heretics. This iniquitous persecution lasted some years. During that time great numbers died, in consequence of the cruelties and insults they underwent. They expired, praying for their persecutors, though they were even denied christian communion, and were after death refused the rites of christian sepulture. During this heavy persecution, the constancy, prudence and piety of the M. Angélique de St. Jean were the stay and support of the community.

During this season of trial many most deeply interesting letters were sent them by their friends. We quote the following extracts from a letter by M. de St. Marthe.

'It is a fatal mistake to believe that we love Christ, if we cannot quit self for him. If a man hate not father and mother, husband or wife, nay his own life also, and take not up his cross to follow Christ, he cannot be his disciple. But what

must we do to hate our own life, and to take up our cross, as the gospel commands, and without doing which we cannot be Christ's disciples? Must we flee into the hermit's seclusion; must we undertake ascetic austerities? Rather let us submit with heartfelt bowedness to the will of God manifested in his providences; from the inmost soul believing that God knows that which is best for us; and from our inmost spirit cheerfully and gladly submitting to, and bearing, whatever cross is brought upon us. Let us rejoice and be willing to be treated as our enemies treat us. Hatred persuades them that it is just we should suffer every sort of evil. They are delighted when they see us reduced to extreme misery. Let us be of one mind with them, though on a different ground. They believe us to be vile; if we know our own hearts, we shall be convinced we are yet viler. If they deprive us of our friends, and separate us from those we love, let us thank them for the needful admonition to quit our earthly holds, to draw nearer and closer to him who has given them to us. If they deprive us of our wealth, and strip us of our earthly possessions, and our brethren who should assist us stand by unconcerned, let us willingly be stripped of these things, which are but the garments of the old Adam, and let us more zealously put on Jesus Christ. * * * It is safer to be little than great in the eyes of men. If they put us in the lowest place, let us gladly accept it, and stay where it pleases God we should be, till he himself sees fit to take us out of it. Why should that seem so difficult to us, when we recollect all that men can do to effect our ruin can only, if we keep under the divine hand, tend to work out our salvation; *for all things shall work together for good to those who love God.* Many are those, who like the brethren of Joseph, strip their brother because he is more righteous than they, and send him an exile in a foreign land, and steel their hearts against pity, though he be in destitution, and though he has been amongst them, and with the same comforts as themselves. But the end, if we are faithful, will be that we too may say to them with Joseph, 'You had the intention to do me evil, but God has changed that evil into good.' Nay, we may use this language much more truly than Joseph, for the good he had to rejoice in was a short lived temporal good, under an earthly monarch, and in a transient earthly kingdom; whereas the suffering disci-

ples of Christ are the elect of the king eternal, immortal, invisible. That which they receive is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; and their kingdom is that blessed land of heavenly promise, the kingdom of heaven, of which the new Jerusalem is the capital, and the Lamb of God the light thereof.

‘Do not, my dear sisters, look back with vain and a too carnal regret at the past; nor let your mind dwell with painful retrospect, in those hours, when your celebrity appeared at its height; when your house walked with God, and when the wise, the great, and the wealthy of this world, with one accord sat at your feet. *When the ear heard you, then it blessed you; when the eye saw you, it gave witness to you.* Remember that Job was no less the servant of the Most High, when his possessions were wrested from him, his family dispersed, and his friends traitors, than when surrounded by all this world can bestow. Nay it is his adversity rather than his prosperity which designates him as the child of God. Hitherto we have been as babes in Christ, fed with milk. Now that it behoves us to grow up as fathers and mothers in Israel, our Heavenly Father, whose love conducts us from *strength to strength, until we shall each appear before him in Zion*, feeds us with strong meat. It would be in vain indeed to inflict crosses upon ourselves, in the pride of our own hearts, supposing we are fit to endure them; but it is a spurious humility, to doubt that we can bear any thing, under his all powerful and sustaining hand. It is humility to distrust ourselves. It is faithlessness to doubt God. Let us then receive it as a token for good, that he has weaned us from the milk to nourish our growth with strong meat. It is true this bread is very hard and very bitter; but it is enough that it is the bread God has appointed for us, and if we humbly accept it from his hand, not looking back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, we shall abundantly grow in grace and benediction. He that has most may find no grace over and above what he needs; but he that has least, shall find that he has also fully sufficient. And if we do but seek his daily blessing on our daily celestial bread of his providing; we shall in its strength, be enabled to journey the whole forty days: that is, during the whole time of our life, the season of our exile, till we arrive at the mount of God, our eternal inheritance. * * *

My dear sisters, let us not deceive ourselves. Let us learn practically, what we have long acknowledged theoretically ; and we shall be quite sure that the truth which the world does not crucify, is not that truth that will ever save us. The godliness which does not scandalize the ungodly world, and which suffers nothing from the wicked, is not that which Jesus Christ laid down his life to exhibit to the world. On the contrary, we have reason to fear that the virtue the world admires, is a mere external human virtue ; and that the esteem and peace which accompany it, will be all its recompense. *

* Shall we, O Lord, dare to say that we suffer too much ; that thou art a cruel and merciless physician, because thou probest our wounds, to apply an efficacious remedy ? Shall we term thee a cruel father, because thou chastenest us after the manner of children, to render us fit for the eternal inheritance to which thy bounty has called us ? Teach us, O Lord, to renounce all the reluctance of nature. Compel me to adopt from necessity that salutary discipline, which the dimness of my spiritual light did not sufficiently enable me to discern as my path ; and which the feebleness of nature rendered me averse to embrace. Assist the short views of sense and of human reason, by the wholesome and beneficent compulsion of thy providence ; snatch us with a strong hand, from our natural love of ease and supineness. O thou good physician of our mortally diseased souls, inflict upon us, without being withheld by nature's agony, all the discipline and operations necessary to our cure. Place us under that regimen, which will best render us strong and robust to follow thee in the path of the cross, to taste the sweet unction, and feed on the hidden manna, imparted to those who suffer for thy sake ; and who feeding on that celestial food, are enabled in the midst of trials and persecutions, *to keep the word of thy patience*, and to rejoice and give thanks, with exceeding gladness ! * *

Let us then view our persecutors no longer as enemies ; but as the furnace men, charged to heap on coal and feed the flame ; whilst the master who presides, regulates the heat and duration of the refining process. How can we like Job submit to the hand of God, whilst we hold in abhorrence the chastening instruments he employs ? Do we submit to the surgeon who pronounces amputation necessary to save life, and yet strike and revile his operator ? Never let us forget

that it is in truth, a secret rebellion against God if we hate persons, simply for being the instruments of inflicting upon us that which God sees it is necessary we should endure. Let us then only pray, that the Son of God may himself walk with us through the fiery furnace; and that he will be pleased not to slacken his hand, till the flames have through his blessing thoroughly wrought their work, and consumed the dross and the tin.

'Can we, O Lord, as thy disciples, desire a path unlike to thine? Thou leftest the glory and adoration of angels of heaven, to sojourn amidst the corruption of earth, and the contumely and contradiction of sinners. Thy birth was amongst brute beasts, thy childhood passed in subjection and poverty. In thy manhood thou wert a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Thy enemies reviled thee, the rulers conspired against thee, the professedly religious cast thee out, thy friends forsook thee, thou enteredst life amidst the beasts of the earth, thou departedst from it, nailed upon the cross. God, thy heavenly Father, as far as appeared to man, abandoned thee; the synagogue, thy mother, crowned thee with lacerating thorns; the world, whom thou diedst to save, placed a reed as a sceptre of mockery and derision in thy hand! If such was the treatment of the sinless master, what can be expected by the sinful servants? O Lord such as thou art, make thou me! Beholding thee, may I be transformed in thy image, and may I one day wake up in thy perfect likeness: in the mean time, strengthen me even on this earth, in my measure, to walk in thy path! Never let me forget that I am the soldier of a captain, made perfect through suffering; the member of a mystic body, whose head was crowned with thorns, and expired on the cross. Let me, like St. Paul, only glory in the cross of Christ, and in him be crucified. Oh how poor and ignoble is all the vain pomp and glory of this world, compared to the privilege of being allowed, like St. John, to draw near to our suffering Lord on Calvary, or to converse on those sufferings with our crucified Lord on Tabor!

'But why have I written you this long epistle on sufferings? Why have I given so much time, to that which ceases with time? Earthly suffering, like earthly joys, are to a christian but *of* time and *for* time. They equally pass away for ever, on its rapidly passing stream. Whilst I have written, and

whilst you have read, how many moments of suffering have hastened by, and been engulfed in the ocean of things passed and never to return ! But the bliss, the mercies, the glories of your eternal inheritance, every moment hasten nearer ; and their ineffable fruition is eternal ! If joys are transient to the world, sorrows are as transient to the Christian. Let the children of light then blush to give that time and anxiety to sorrows which they shall so soon for ever leave : and not waste their precious time and thoughts on transient things, which they condemn in the children of the world when given to pleasure. The root of the evil is the same in both ; since in either instance, the thoughts, the interest and the mind, are given to what is merely temporal and transitory ; but our privilege is, *to have our conversation in heaven*, our heart and treasure fixed on what is eternal ! Never let us live below it !

My dear Sisters, with great consideration,

Yours in our common Lord,

ST. MARTHE.'

The recluses, meanwhile, were exposed to sufferings little less severe than the nuns. Hand-bills were posted in the corners of every street, offering rewards to those who should apprehend them. Many of the clergy did not hesitate to express their hopes of bringing them to the Bastille, or the stake. They wandered from one hiding place to another, with their lives in their hands. Not unfrequently the police-officers searched the very rooms in which they lay concealed. At length M. Singlin died from the extremity of suffering. M. de Saci and M. Fontaine were seized, and put in the Bastille. Their arrest was accompanied with many circumstances of unnecessary cruelty. During their stay in the Bastille, they were continually threatened with poison. How often may the just retribution of God be traced even in this life ! The officer, who thus exceeded his commission, in unmercifully persecuting the servants of his Lord, himself died a death of torture, two month after, by the hand of his own child. This officer was M. Aubray, father to the famous or rather infamous poisoner, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers.

CHAPTER XI.

Pacification of Clement IX—Wide celebrity of Port Royal des Champs.—Last days of the Sœur Flavie Passart, and of the Abbess Dorothee Perdreau.

WHILE the persecution of the Port Royalists was thus continued, that part of their friends who only occasionally retired to Port Royal, escaped the extremity of the tempest. They were indeed marked as Jansenists in the public eye, but their high rank exempted them from violence; and their eminent virtue and integrity in discharging the most important trusts, compelled universal respect and esteem. M. de Pomponne, son to M. de Andilly, and brother to the abbess of Port Royal, was minister of state. Henri Arnauld was bishop of Angers: the Duke of Liancourt was Governor of Normandy. Whole provinces were reaping the fruits of the munificence of the Duke and Duchess of Longueville, and the Prince and Princess of Conti. However bigoted men might be, they were too clear sighted to employ persecution against those with whose exaltation their own interests were so immediately interwoven. Hence these, and many other personages of equal merit, yet possessed considerable influence.

They could not but still entertain the most warm affection and the most profound veneration for the saints, whose piety had been instrumental in their conversion. They only waited a favourable opportunity to shew the firmness of their attachment by effectually serving them. As soon as the first fury of the storm had a little spent itself, they consulted together. They resolved to unite their strength, and to exert the whole weight of their influence to serve their friends. The Duchess of Longueville took upon herself to be the ostensible head of this party. All deliberations were carried on in her mansion. Under her protection, the archbishop of Sens, the bishop of Châlons, with Arnauld and Nicole, drew up a plan of pacifica-

tion. They proposed, that on their part, the signature of the formulary should be conceded, on condition that on the Pope's, an explanation should be accepted. This explanation contained a full submission in matters of faith, and promised, as before, a respectful silence in matters of fact.

The Duchess of Longueville wrote herself to the Pope on the subject. Clement IX. had then just entered on his pontificate. He was a man of a pacific disposition, and had long deplored the divisions of the church. He immediately issued a brief of reconciliation. This act was termed the pacification of Clement IX. It took place in 1668. The prison doors were immediately opened. M. Arnauld was introduced at court. The recluses returned in peace to Port Royal. The nuns were released from their long confinement. The confessors and directors were restored. Universal felicitations were made to the Jansenists. Even the Gallican clergy and the archbishop of Paris, who had declared them rebels and heretics, joined in congratulations. They found no difficulty, at the king's request, in proclaiming their perfect orthodoxy and sanctity. The joy of the common people was unbounded; for they had always considered the Jansenists as saints. But above all, the joy of the venerable directors was great, when they found that their flock, though so long scattered, had individually deepened in piety. They were as the three children coming out of the furnace, not only with their clothes unsinged, but loosed from the bonds with which they had entered.

The period which immediately succeeded this persecution, was the brightest in the annals of Port Royal. The fame of this seclusion was extensively spread. Its reputation both for learning and sanctity, was firmly established. The number of nuns and of recluses became augmented in a degree far exceeding that of any former period. Amongst several of the new recluses were persons of very large fortune. Considerable sums were expended in enlarging the monastery and gardens. The Duke of Luynes and M. de Bagnols had each appropriated immense sums to add to the abbey. The former of these gentlemen alone built an additional dormitory, containing seventy-two cells. The Duke of Liancourt also and the Duchess of Longueville built several new apartments. Port Royal des Champs became one of the most spacious abbeys in all France. It contained nearly two hundred nuns, besides a

very considerable number of ladies, who had apartments in the monastery, and whose piety induced them to wish to board there without assuming the monastic habit. The recluses also had very considerably increased their numbers, and the celebrity of Port Royal had trebly multiplied the number of those friends who wished to be under their direction. Families of rank, affluence, and piety, who did not wish to quit their occupations in the world, built themselves country houses in the valley of Port Royal, in order to enjoy the society of its pious and learned inhabitants. Amongst this class were the Duchess of Longueville, the Duke and Duchess of Luynes, and of Liancourt.

The Port Royalists might now be divided into three general classes. The nuns who occupied the monastery and followed the Cistercian rule. The recluses, who led a retired life, free from all luxury or unnecessary intercourse with men, and who each served the whole community by following some occupation either manual or intellectual. These were bound by no vows. They, at this period, consisted of two companies. The men who lived at the farm-house belonging to Port Royal and other small cottages, and the ladies above mentioned, who boarded in apartments in the monastery. The third class was composed of the very large multitude of friends under their direction. Some of them had country houses near Port Royal, and others only occasionally retired to board there.

The institution had been long important in the eyes of the world, from the literary celebrity and acknowledged piety of its persecuted inhabitants. It now began to be so from the magnitude of its numbers, and from the immense wealth and exalted rank of a large proportion of its members. For eleven years it continued to flourish. Its prosperity and usefulness seemed to increase day by day. On every side it appeared blessing and blessed. The same God who had given them grace sufficient for their day in adversity, now bestowed on them that double portion which is needful to stand in prosperity. Though so many rich, so many noble, so many learned were called, still Port Royal stood a bright example of unfeigned humility and self-abasement, of self-denial, charity, daily taking up the cross, and following a crucified Lord.

In the winter of 1670, death deprived the monastery of Port Royal des Champs of very many of its members. Amongst

these was a lay sister called Marie Madeleine de Charron, on whom God shewed forth his mercy in a very particular manner. She was the last nun who quitted the house of Paris, to unite herself to her sisters of Port Royal des Champs. "She thought herself already in Paradise," said the M. Angélique de St. Jean, "when she saw herself restored to the M. Agnès, and the community. All her sentiments were one continual succession of joy, praise, and thanksgiving, for her restoration. She lived in peace, and died in humble faith." God who has pity on whom he will, and who leaves to their natural hardness of heart whom he sees fit, cited at the same time before his tribunal the S. Flavie Passart, so famous for her intrigues and her treachery.

As soon as the M. Agnès heard that she was dangerously ill, she was deeply touched with the state of this wretched person; she seemed as though her heart had forgotten all the years of her duplicity, treachery, and enmity: and it only retained a recollection of her, as when, abandoned and destitute, she in her childhood cast herself on the charity of the M. Angélique. Having heard that she was in imminent danger, and that she was friendless in the midst of the community she had taken such pains to disunite from Port Royal; the M. Agnès sat down and wrote to this most unworthy daughter a heart-affecting letter. It was expressed with the affection of a spiritual mother; but also with the faithfulness of one, who feels the value of the immortal soul, and who bears in mind, that the person receiving it may soon be called into the presence of God.

The following circumstances gave occasion to this letter:— M. Desseaux, a man of deep piety, who had lived for forty years a retired life at Champ Garnier, a farm belonging to Port Royal, and who had a sister who was a nun there, was nephew to the S. Flavie. Having heard that his aunt was very ill he went over to Paris, to enquire after her. He was informed that she was at the last extremity. He then charged the nun at the turn, who was his cousin, to go to the S. Flavie, and to tell her that he was come to enquire after her health, both on his own account and on that of the nuns of Port Royal, who were always anxious concerning her welfare. The nun having executed her commission, returned; and brought word from the sick nun, that she deeply felt his kindness in taking the

trouble of coming ; and earnestly recommended herself to his prayers and no less to those of the nuns of Port Royal des Champs. M. Desseaux was already mounted on his horse to return, when he was again summoned by one of the nuns of the turn, and told there was yet a word more she wished to say. Being again seated in the parlour, the same nun, his cousin, who had before spoken to him, after having carefully shut the door, asked him if he was quite alone. M. Desseaux having answered that he was ; she caused another nun to draw near, and then told him that she was expressly charged by the S. Flavie to express to him the most lively gratitude for the charity of the nuns of Port Royal ; and that not only for their present enquiries, but especially for all the numberless obligations for which she was indebted to them ; and that she charged the nun above all to say that being now in the immediate prospect of eternity, she threw herself in spirit at their feet, and most unfeignedly besought their forgiveness, and earnestly entreated them to forget the past. But these nuns at the same time represented the duration under which they found themselves enthralled, and required M. Desseaux to give them his assurance of the most inviolable secrecy. M. Desseaux accordingly returned to Port Royal des Champs, and executed his commission. That community, deeply affected by the state of their former sister, and by the message she had sent, considered how they might devise some means of making known to her, that they accepted her message in good part, and heartily forgave her, hoping God would do the same. On this account, the M. Agnès wrote the above mentioned letter ; the nuns thinking nothing could prove more consolatory to her, on account of the strict intimacy which had formerly subsisted between them. The epistle was written in great haste, because M. Desseaux had reported the physician to have pronounced that in all probability the S. Flavie had not twenty-four hours to live. The M. Agnès, wishing both to comfort the S. Flavie, and also to maintain the strictest secrecy as to what had passed, that she might neither betray the intermediate nuns, nor expose the dying penitent to ill-treatment, purposely avoided any reference to the message she had received ; and contented herself with only expressing the strong and continued affection of the nuns of Port Royal, and assuring her of their entire forgetfulness

of the past; but beseeching her, if anything pressed upon her own conscience, to look to God through the merits of Christ, who was abundant in mercy, and whose precious blood would wash away all sin. No more was heard on the subject for a whole month; at the expiration of which time a long letter was delivered to the M. Agnès bearing the signature of the S. Flavie, but neither expressed in her style, which was peculiar, nor yet written in her hand. This epistle, after many common place observations, termed the nuns of Port Royal disobedient, rebellious, &c. and added, that her greatest consolation was the recollection of her own conduct at Port Royal. The letter was a long one; but whilst the nuns of Port Royal des Champs were occupied in imagining whence it originated, they received intelligence of the death of the S. Flavie, which must have taken place in less than a week after the date of the letter. The mystery of this epistle was never unraveled. Whether she in truth repented or not, must be left to the Searcher of hearts. Whether as a sincere penitent she found acceptance with God, who can snatch a brand even from the burning; and only experienced the temporal wretchedness of finding herself on her death-bed, separated from all her faithful spiritual friends, and surrounded by persons only occupied in betraying her soul, in stifling the voice of her bitter remorse, and in denying her every means of spiritual fellowship; or whether God saw fit to leave her, to shoot the irrevocable gulf steeped in the spirit of spiritual slumber and sleep, as an awful warning instead of a monument of saving grace, it is not for us to decide. No one had pity on her soul but the nuns of Port Royal whom she had so basely betrayed; they made for her the usual prayers which they continued for thirty days. The archbishop of Paris strictly forbade that any particulars of her death should be enquired into on the one hand, or mentioned on the other.

Though it did not occur till very many years after, this seems a suitable occasion to introduce the account of the close of her tool and companion in error. It was however not until the beginning of the year 1685, that God cited to his tribunal the S. Dorothee Perdreau. She had maintained for many years her usurped seat of abbess of Port Royal de Paris; a possession undisturbed at least by men, but unblessed by God. The remorse, which first occasionally seemed to rouse

her from her deep lethargy, gradually became more acute and harrowing ; it gave her perpetual pain, and left its deep traces on her harrassed, anxious, and troubled countenance. Truly there is no peace to the wicked. At length, unable to bear her torment, she earnestly, and at all hazards, besought permission to see and speak and pour out her heart to some of her former friends ; but she never could obtain it. The false counselors who had urged her to the steps she had taken, would never permit her to retrace them. In vain did they try to calm her acute anguish. Often did she exclaim, in the bitterness of her heart : "I have *once* been at Port Royal, and once drank of its spirit ! I know, better than you can, the scandal and infamy of my usurping from ambition, the charge which so holy a nun as the M. Angélique Arnauld renounced from humility !" Nor was this her only grief ; sorrow, distress, harrassment and vexation, tormented her on all sides. On the one hand, the S. Flavie, a person far her superior in talent and intrigue, and who had begun her schemes solely with a view to be abbess herself, was her most unrelenting enemy. In public she treated her with the most cutting contempt and ridicule ; secretly she formed never-ending plots and cabals against her, and in every respect sought to thwart and contradict her. In vain did the S. Dorothee in sincere repentance frequently desire to do the best she could to establish the ancient discipline of Port Royal in her own usurped monastery. The five or six nuns of Port Royal, who had been persuaded to join her by the sophistry of false teachers, no longer paid her the obedience they had formerly yielded to their superiors at Port Royal. The S. Dorothee soon found, what will ever be experienced by unfaithful spiritual guides, that it is much more easy to maintain a perfectly strict religious discipline, than to enforce a relaxed one : because a sacrifice of natural will must take place in either case ; and the human heart will far sooner make that sacrifice when what is required is truly according to the full dictates of conscience, and to the advice of a person we know to be faithful, than when the sacrifice falls short of that which is truly the will of God, and is imposed for form's sake by a person we know to be unfaithful. It is easier to make a complete sacrifice that will fully satisfy conscience, than a half sacrifice which falls short of it. Hence in every church and every

religious institution, any relaxation is but the prelude to a complete and entire fall. Finding it impossible to govern those who knew her to be unfaithful, she was compelled to yield one point after another, in the hopes of bribing them even to preserve a poor outward shew of respect. Her spiritual directors added still more to her affliction. They ruled her with a rod of iron; and continually stopped her mouth with the most haughty insolence, whenever she deplored to them, which she often did with bitter tears, the relaxation of her house. The fact was that the evil counselors who had separated Port Royal de Paris from Port Royal des Champs, felt their honour interested in the flourishing state of the former. But as only eight sisters out of the whole number of one hundred and eighty Port Royal nuns were the fruit of their sophistry and cajolery, and of the threats and incarceration of years, and as no person of any piety would join their iniquitous institution, they found themselves in a most awkward situation. The total incapacity of the S. Dorothée, and the indulgences they were obliged to connive at to maintain their usurpations, together with festivals they gave to propitiate the public, had occasioned the most entire disorganization of their temporal affairs: so that although they had wrested from Port Royal des Champs the magnificent house and establishment of Port Royal de Paris, and though they had iniquitously deprived the hundred and eighty inhabitants of Port Royal des Champs at different times of nearly two thirds of its revenues for the house at Paris, which contained eight lapsed Port Royal nuns; yet they saw themselves on the eve of a scandalous bankruptcy. Their poverty and distress, as well as their relaxed discipline and extravagance, were the subject at every little party in Paris; and they saw this institution, which it had been the object of so many years, of so much sophistry, fraud and oppression, to subvert, turned into a mere engine of holding them up to the contempt and derision of all catholic christendom. In order then to do away with this imputation, these evil directors had it at heart above all things to increase the number of the nuns; but as no religious persons would join them, these directors obliged the abbess to relax the rules in every point, in order to open the door to the multitudes, whom want of fortune to establish themselves in the world reduced to wish for an asylum; but whom want of piety and

vocation excluded from Port Royal des Champs. Yet even this means did not succeed; the ten or twelve who came, were sufficient effectually to render hopeless any attempt at reformation; whilst they were far too few to give the monastery reputation in the eyes of the world; all of which had success embittered the spiritual directors still more against the unfortunate abbess, who had been their tool. On her they now threw all the blame, instead of taking it to themselves, to whom it was chiefly due. They had indeed raised her to the abbacy almost solely on account of her incapacity, hoping to find in her an easy tool; but they now discovered that that very incapacity wholly precluded the strenuous exertion which might possibly have retrieved affairs. The S. Dorothée reproached her directors continually with having imposed on her the burthen of governing others; and declared again and again, with tears, that she never would have acceded but from the fear lest the house should be dissolved and lost. She added, with the most piercing expressions of sorrow, that they must be alone responsible for all the evil; that they well knew it was solely their threats, and her fearfulness and want of intrepidity to bear like her mothers and sisters the privation of sacraments, and fulminations of excommunications, which had alone prevented her from following those she had ever venerated; and whose seat they had forced her, against her will and against her conscience, to usurp. And two or three of the nuns of the ancient stamp having joined with her, and having bitterly bewailed the relaxed state of the monastery to a priest who sometimes officiated there, and who was the only spiritual preacher they had; the young relaxed ones complained to the director, and had him silenced. Those who had placed her in office, were ever upbraiding her with having accepted it, and with her incapacity, which she was also continually reminded of, in the most disrespectful terms, by her nuns. Such was the state of this unhappy abbess. Every thing showed her deep distress of mind. Having at one time heard of a pious Benedictine, she wrote to him, begging him to come for the urgent spiritual relief of one of her nuns. He instantly went there at seven in the morning when the abbess herself came, and in tears and in the greatest distress spoke of her own wretched situation, and of the great pain and remorse she felt at having been terrified into compliance by

bad advisers. She spoke till twelve o'clock at noon, and in the greatest anguish and agitation. In vain did she fast, pray, and torment herself, her own usurpation, the unjust wresting of the house and revenues of Port Royal, and its consequent evils, lay heavy on her heart. Well might she feel that it could not have the blessing of God. The Benedictine expressed his satisfaction at her deep compunction. "Truly," he said, "these at least are precious remains." "Ah," said the miserable abbess, "our *best* moments are but an empty shadow of what we learnt once at Port Royal! There, there, at that blessed house, which we fools have miserably betrayed, there indeed you will see the substance itself!" Very soon after, the news arrived that the M. Dorothee Perdreau had departed this life, on the 4th of January, 1685. But the particulars of her death were carefully hushed up.

Soon after however, a most extraordinary story was covertly circulated; so marvelous as to refute belief, and yet so awful and so characteristic, that many thought it at least shewed that God can punish by the operations of an evil conscience and a troubled imagination, without the intervention of any external circumstances. The story was again hushed up; yet a sort of mystery was preserved, which prevented it from being utterly disbelieved. But the circumstance itself was a few weeks after authenticated from Port Royal de Paris itself. The widow of the Marquis of Mongobert having one day paid a visit to Mde. de la Grange, a nun at Port Royal de Paris, she asked her whether the story current of the abbess Dorothee Perdreau was true. Mde. de la Grange said, "I cannot take upon me to say what particulars may have been related to you; but nothing is more certainly true, than the mysterious circumstances with which it was accompanied. We can trust you; and every particular we are about to tell you, you may assuredly rely upon." She then called another nun, and said to her, "My sister, draw near; we may open our minds to this lady, and speak to her in full confidence. Do let us unburden our hearts, and confide to her what has passed." The nuns then related the dreadful remorse and perturbation of mind experienced by the S. Dorothee; and not by her only, but by some of the unfaithful nuns of Port Royal, her companions in guilt. They macerated their flesh, performed long and rigorous fasts, the most austere penances, and long

watches, but in vain ; it seemed as if they found no peace. One evening, being the 29th of December, all the other nuns having retired to bed, it was the turn of two of the former Port Royal nuns to perform the nightly watch at the perpetual adoration of the holy sacrament. The nuns they relieved had retired, and they knelt down alone in the church ; that church, whose walls had heard their early vows ; in which the M. Angélique, who had received them to profession, the M. Suireau des Anges, and so many of the worthies of Port Royal, whose memories they had disgraced, were buried. A solitary lamp steadily but dimly burnt over the altar ; and they knelt with awe, and yet seeking to fix their heart in deep penitence on him whose sacrifice is perpetuated upon it. The dampness of the church struck a chill over them. The night was dark and gusty. Yet as they thought on him whose precious blood was spilt for all sin, they felt a sad comfort and deep abasement.

They were at an advanced age ; they had fasted long and severely ; the watch was to be prolonged through all the night. They prayed, till mental prayer succeeded to vocal ; and at length, distinct thought seemed as it were absorbed in silence before the awful presence of God. When suddenly they saw as it were a shadow rise from the tomb of the M. Angélique, which was just without the grate separating the nuns' choir from the nave of the church ; and as they looked, they saw the shade assume her semblance. It bore her countenance, but the icy gravity of death, and of stern reproof sat upon it. In her shadowy hand was the abbess's crosier. And it passed in with a majestic port beyond that of living mortals, drawing near from the dark recesses in the opposite depths of the church. The grate stopped it not. It entered their choir, drawing near with a grave and solemn step. The two nuns were transfixed with awe and horrible fear. Their flesh crept as it approached ; till it stopped (having passed the whole length of the choir) and seemed to sit down in the abbess's seat ; that is, in the first place at the bottom of the choir on the right side. The apparition being seated, and elevating the crosier, they thought they saw, by an opposite door, a second shadowy form enter, resembling the S. Dorothee, on whom the apparition fixed its glazed eyes, and sternly said, "S. Dorothee ! S. Dorothee ! I hereby summon you ! Ap-

pear before the tribunal of God, and give up your account!" The accent was awful and heart-chilling; and as the spectre fixed its eyes, it seemed as though the S. Dorothee was irresistibly drawn near by a deadly fascination; till being about to prostrate herself at the footstool of the spectre abbess, the whole vanished. And the spell being as it were broken, the nuns with one accord rushed out of the church, and ran to the abbess Dorothee, to whom they told the whole: who being seized with the most violent terror, exclaimed, "O my God! my God! I shall die immediately," which she accordingly did a few days after.*

Such was the relation of Mde. la Grange to Mde. de Montgobert. Whatever might be their opinion of this singular narration, at the present day it will probably receive but one interpretation. It is indeed an awful memento, that a righteous God needs no extraordinary *outward* chastisements to punish the guilty: the terrors of an evil conscience and a troubled imagination may prove as efficient instruments of punishment in his retributive justice as the most severe temporal scourge.

* The singularity of this relation seems to demand a more particular reference. See *Lettre de Du Fosse* at the end of *Du Fosse's Memoires* pp. 515—517. Also *Dom Clemencet*, Tom. 8. pp. 99. Also *Gilbert's Memoires*, Tom. 3. pp. 6—8.—Also *Lettres Edifiantes*. Likewise see the death of l'Abbesse intruse Dorothee Perdreau in the general histories of Port Royal. Clemencet, Gilbert, &c., &c.

CHAPTER XII.

*Death of the Duchess of Longueville.—Violent persecution.—
Recluses exiled.—Death of M. de Saci, and of the
M. Angélique de St. Jean.*

FOR the short space of eleven years, the community of Port Royal des Champs shone forth, a brilliant example of almost every gift of nature and of grace. At the end of this period, in the year 1679, the Duchess of Longueville died. It then clearly appeared what had been the real motive for suspending the persecution. The king's respect for so near a relative was the true cause of the Jansenists being so long unmolested during the life of that princess. She had scarcely been deceased one month before the Jesuits openly renewed their hostilities.

That storm now burst upon them which at last overwhelmed Port Royal. All the recluses received an order from government finally and immediately to quit Port Royal. Most of them died in poverty and exile, but rich in faith and good works. A lingering but cruel persecution was instituted against the nuns, who were now deprived of their protectors. They were first interdicted from receiving either scholars or novices. This alone would have insured the termination of the establishment. But their enemies were not content with awaiting what might be called its natural death. Although the nuns had been unjustly deprived of their property, their charity did not fail. They had formerly maintained four medical men on purpose to attend the poor. Their funds were now inadequate to this expense. They learned to dress their wounds themselves. As they had formerly poured forth charities out of their abundance, they now denied themselves, to continue them in their poverty. They were frequently known with a cheerful countenance to make a liberal donation, when at the same time they had not wherewith to purchase food for the next meal.

Meanwhile, as temporal sorrows pursued, and temporal losses assailed them on every side, so their faith was not suffered to fail. Their spiritual riches seemed still to increase, and the daily trimmed lamps of these truly wise virgins shone the brighter, and gave forth a light more pure, as the quickly closing night of adversity blackened around them. Very many of the recluses and spiritual guides, who though removed to distant places of exile still carried on an occasional intercourse by letter with Port Royal, were now called from poverty and exile on earth, to the presence of the divine Master they had so long and so faithfully served. There is scarcely any one of their number whose life would not furnish a religious or literary biographer with a highly interesting subject. But the limits of this work must prevent our entering a theme which would afford such voluminous materials. We will not, however, refuse our readers a brief sketch of the death and funeral of M. de Saci; * written by Fontaine, his pupil, his secretary, and his faithful friend during his long imprisonment in the Bastille.

M. de Saci took up his abode entirely at Port Royal des Champs about three or four years after his liberation from the Bastille. I had apartments at first in the neighbourhood of Paris, and afterwards at St. Mandé, for the convenience of going backwards and forwards to superintend the publication of his Bible. It was painful to me to be in any degree separated from my dear and revered guide and master to whom I had devoted myself even from my childhood upwards; who had been the guide of my boyhood, the faithful spiritual director of my manhood, the master in whose service I was employed, and with whom I had the favour to be permitted to remain during his long imprisonment. Nevertheless, though I had seldom if ever before been separated from him, I cheerfully took up my abode there, that I might the more assiduously and effectually promote his business, and the sooner

* Louis Isaac le Maître de Saci, was youngest brother to M. le Maître; and like him, a recluse at Port Royal. He entered priest's orders, and was for many years its director. He was eminently pious, even from his youth up. His translation of the Bible is by many persons esteemed the best version of the scriptures extant, not excepting our own. The text is that used by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is accompanied by a commentary, which appears to have been highly useful to many of our most celebrated commentators, amongst whom we may specially mention Gill and Henry. It was chiefly written in the Bastille, in company with Du Fosse.

return to my beloved seclusion. I therefore spent the whole of the winter of 1678 at St. Mandé, continually hoping that each month, as it rolled by, would bring my labours to a conclusion; and refreshing myself with the prospect of then immediately returning to my dear master, and offering myself to serve him for life, in any office in which it should please him to employ me.

'A few weeks however after Easter, I received a letter from M. de Saci, desiring me to come over to him to Port Royal des Champs without delay. I joyfully received the summons, imagining that M. de Saci was about to anticipate the proposal I had so long cherished at heart. I instantly resolved to give up every prospect of pecuniary emolument and go. I cannot describe the delight with which I caught the first glimpse of the top of the spire of Port Royal, as I drew near to the brow of the steep wooded descent that overhangs the monastery. God (thought I) has in loving-kindness and mercy, granted all the ardent desires so long cherished in the secret of my heart. Yes, in this beloved valley shall I find my home; to my dear and honoured master shall I devote the rest of a life which he first was the means of dedicating to God. In this spot hallowed by so many saints shall I end my days. I shall sleep at the feet of him, who first taught me to know the value of the precious blood of Christ; my dust shall rest in peace, amongst the dust of his saints. Oh with what fulness of joy did I once again enter the well known church; and, throwing myself prostrate, bless God and offer myself to him to do with me what seemed to him good. But oh, how little do we often know what we pray for! God did indeed hear my prayer; and answer it. He answered it in abundant mercy, yet far differently to what I expected.

'As soon as I entered M. de Saci's study, he arose and tenderly and closely embraced me, with an expression of emotion which he was not wont to betray; and which his habitual calmness and tranquillity rendered very unusual. At length I had courage to make my proposal; but what was my astonishment, when he replied in evident surprise, "How? is it possible you do not know that M. de Harley, the archbishop of Paris, was here yesterday (*May 17, 1679*); and has given notice to every one of us to retire from hence for ever within a week." The tears came into my eyes, but I

could not answer, so totally unexpected was this blow.

‘Having however obtained a comfortable sum by copying manuscripts, and by having been employed as a professor in the Port Royal schools, I now blessed God, who had thus put it into my power to ask the dear and revered master, to whom all my life I had been so deeply indebted, to do me the favour to come and reside with me at St. Mandé ; and to repose his declining years with one who so deeply owed him a pupil’s reverence, and more than a child’s affection. Yet I had not courage at once to make this request to one so very greatly my superior, and to whom I owed such continual obligation. My dear master seeing my heart wrung, said, “Yes, my dear friend, so it is ! we have often blessed God for having made us the means of usefulness to others ; let us now bless him, for arranging for us a retreat, which by his grace may be so useful to ourselves. Alas ! how much do even the most holy and best of his servants need of purification. How much more so do we. Our spiritual fathers, M. de St. Cyran, M. de Singlin, M. Rebours, M. Dumont ; all saints, all chosen faithful servants ; yet after they had served their long and arduous day, had each of them the favour to have a way opened to them (for a favour it was, though opened by persecution) to prepare themselves in their latter days, for their entrance into the immediate presence of God. It was the voice of the Lord, though speaking through the mouths of their enemies ; yet speaking in tender mercy, for their good. Surely then if they reaped that blessing, and found it to be so when uttered by an enemy who had no legitimate authority, how shall we not listen to him, even more willingly, when he speaks to us by the mouth of our ecclesiastical superior ?” He added much more, which my emotion prevented me from distinctly remembering. But as he spoke, my soul became tranquilized, and returned to its rest. When he ceased, I besought him to do me the honour to come and dwell with me at St. Mandé. I told him that I had taken a large house there, to which was attached a neat and commodious chapel ; and that I had beguiled the hours of my long separation from Port Royal by furnishing it in a plain but commodious manner, on purpose to have it in my power to receive there any of my dear fathers in Christ, should either business require their temporary residence in the proximity of Paris ; or should any new

persecution arise to scatter them from their beloved seclusion. I warmly urged my suit, and I observed with inexpressible joy, that his choice would have been to comply ; but he was afterwards so strongly urged to fix his abode at Pomponne, that he could not refuse ; either consistently with propriety to so near a relation as M. de Pomponne,* or with a due regard for what might yet be done, through his medium, to delay the final extinction of Port Royal. He retired then to Pomponne, where I often visited him, and where he lived in a small cottage in profound seclusion. M. de Luzançi, the brother of the M. Angélique de St Jean, and like myself his pupil and friend, shared his retreat. His time was chiefly spent in prayer, and in writing. Many of his most valuable works were either composed or revised in this solitude. M. de Luzançi, whose modesty withheld him from undertaking works of his own, assisted in transcribing, and superintended the printing and publication. How we find that nothing is lost which is done in obedience to the will of God, which can pour an equal blessing either on social or solitary duties ! When M. de Saci's path was appointed by God at Port Royal, he shone as a light amidst those bright luminaries. Numbers of the rising generation educated in their schools of recluses retired at les Granges, and of holy nuns and friends of Port Royal, looked to him for direction ; and all those multitudes, holy and enlightened as they were, would have exerted every nerve to prevent M. de Saci's banishment ; and considered his imprisonment in the Bastille, and his exile at Pomponne, as the greatest blow that vital religion could receive. Yet how different are the ways of God to ours ! It is to that very imprisonment in the Bastille, that we are indebted for his invaluable translation and comment on the bible. To his exile, we likewise owe many of his spiritual letters, and the most excellent of his works. That voice with which he spake amidst his disciples in the days of his publicity, is passed away with them from the earth ; and it is from the very entombment of the exile they most apprehended, that his usefulness has acquired permanence : and that he is enabled to make that voice of wisdom and of evangelical truth still heard, amidst the remoteness of distant centuries.

* He was brother to the abbess Angélique de St. Jean, first cousin to M. de Saci, and first minister of state to Louis XIV.

M. de Saci having received a handsome annuity from the Duchess of Longueville, disposed of a considerable part of it in forming a library, with a view to lend books to those destitute of the means of procuring them; the remainder he spent in buying and distributing books to poor but devoted ecclesiastics. The last time I saw him, being then at the advanced age of seventy-one years, he requested me to select from his library all the books I might like to have, as he intended leaving his library to M. du Fossé; but wished in the mean time to make me a handsome present of books he had himself used, and which he meant afterwards to replace.

For four years M. de Saci continued in his retirement daily increasing in piety and humility. In the summer of 1683, he was seized with a violent attack of fever, so that his life was despaired of. When his illness was known, all his friends flocked from every quarter once more to see him. But as there were such multitudes, to whom his labours had been useful, and who all once more wished to see their spiritual Father, the physicians found it necessary to issue an order to admit no one. I was amongst the number of those who came. I had imagined that my long attachment of forty years; that my having been with him from my boyhood, almost as a servant, a son, and a friend; that my having nursed him in similar illnesses during his imprisonment, would have excepted me. But he was not in a state to be consulted, and the friends then about him knew not Port Royal nor our relations to each other. They meant to be faithful, and I too amongst the common company of well wishers was denied. This did indeed cut me to the heart. Often when I considered the disparity of our years, had I though with deep pain contemplated his death: but I thought at least that I, his pupil and in affection as his child, should nurse him in his sickness, and close my honoured father's eyes. This then was an unexpected stroke. I mention it because I have ever found that when God sees fit to try us, he appoints those circumstances in our trials which shall really answer the purpose he intended of probing our hearts and proving of a truth what manner of spirit we are actually of. Nor have I in the course of a long life ever found that seeking to bear trials, by endeavouring to anticipate their circumstances, ever availed me; or could be a substitute for a heart truly dedicated to the will of God, and

from a genuine love to him bending to any circumstances he may see good to bring us. The feelings which agonized my heart during this period I cannot describe. This however I felt sure of, that so heavy a chastisement would not have been inflicted but to produce an equally important blessing. My apprehensions however proved groundless; the fever was assuaged. And as soon as my dear master was better, he wrote me a most kind letter, which quite consoled me for my disappointment; and requested me to come and spend a few days with him immediately. I did so, and the kind manner in which he received me will never be effaced from my memory. Although I then little thought it, he had but one single week to live. On entering the room, my saint-like master came forward with an affectionate smile to embrace me. I threw myself at his feet, where I had never thought to have prostrated myself again, and clasped his knees, to implore a benediction, but tears choked my utterance. We both wept, and he closely embraced me, and held me long in his arms, exclaiming as Paul to Timothy, "My son in the gospel of Christ, and in faithful and dutiful affection my son!"

'On looking back to this visit, so near the conclusion of his life, I involuntarily thought that in some measure he might be said to copy his divine Master, who having loved his own loved them to the end. M. de Saci said he was deeply grieved they had in his illness kept him from one so particularly his own. This sentence at once seemed to overpay all I had felt. In this last visit it was so delightful to see him once more, that I can scarcely remember distinctly what passed; though I shall never forget the sweet and holy impression.

'And now I must enter upon the painful recital of his death at which I was not present. A few days before that event, a general jubilee took place, as though God would open to his servant all the treasures of his grace on earth, before he took him to behold his glory in heaven. The jubilee concluded on the last day of 1683, and M. de Saci expired on the 4th of January, 1684. On the day preceding he had as usual performed the daily service in the domestic chapel. He on that day entered into it, not merely with his usual deep devotion and thoughtfulness, but with such uncommon expression of earnest fervour, that a person present, whilst he repeated the *Domine non sum dignus* and the *Agnus Dei*, said that his

very countenance seemed to beam with light and joy and peace. Like Stephen he was looking upwards steadfastly to heaven, beholding Jesus at the right hand of God ; and like him his face shone as an angel's with the reflected glory. He seemed as though he saw him whom he addressed face to face. Yet whilst his spirit was filled with this divine fervour, his soul was in truth expanding her angel wings to rise and meet her God. The weather was intensely cold ; and at the conclusion of the service, no sooner had he passed the threshold of the chapel, than he fainted. It was a considerable time before he could be restored. At twelve o'clock, which was the dinner hour, he however sufficiently recovered to take his usual seat at table. He at first indeed appeared very feeble, but he gradually revived, and before the meal was concluded, appeared as well as he had usually been since his recovery from the severe fever before mentioned. An hour after dinner he began, or more exactly speaking seemed to slide unpremeditatedly into a spiritual discourse, which imperceptibly became more and more animated ; so that it seemed to the whole family, who were still sitting round the fire side, (as was their custom after dinner,) as though the whole fountains of his heart and soul were broken up, and poured out in one full tide of deep and holy inspiration and heavenly eloquence. He had begun on the subject of the office of the day, concerning which some question had been addressed to him ; but he soon turned to that of the unsearchable riches and treasures of Christ ; a subject always inexhaustible to him ; and now he appeared animated with an almost supernatural impulse. It seemed like a ship, which setting out from the shore at first is towed along in shallow water ; till being once launched fairly in the deep ocean, she spreads her ample canvas ; the breath of heaven inflates her sails ; the sun plays on her masts ; and she speeds her glorious and exulting course, as in an ocean of light. So it was this day with M. de Saci, when he once entered on this subject. It seemed as though a view of heavenly glory opened to his soul ; he appeared transported with holy awe, zeal, and love ; his countenance became illumined, like that of a seraph, and an awful and divinely majestic eloquence flowed from his lips, and overflowed and penetrated every heart. Did some secret presentiment thus carry him almost beyond the limit of mortal bounds ? Do the souls of the saints of God,

thus on the confines of this lower world, inhale a heavenly air, and behold a ray of glory from heaven's opening gates, that we cannot yet discern? Does she hear a voice from the heavenly Jerusalem she is entering, which we cannot hear? However this may be, it is certain that for two whole hours he held every heart enwrapped, every ear fixed, and every soul entranced, by these, the last words he was ever as a minister to pronounce amongst men. On concluding he arose and quitted the room, leaving his audience penetrated to the heart. A deep silence of many minutes ensued. Not one person seemed willing to desecrate the powerful impression, by breaking the silence with any common speech: till at length Madame Hypolyte, who kept M. de Saci's house, first broke it by saying in a tone of deep penetration these few words, "Believe me, every one of you who hear me; such a voice as we have now heard is never uttered amongst men, but from the lips of one on the verge of heavenly glory."

'Scarcely had she uttered the words when she was suddenly summoned to M. de Saci, who had again swooned. He was once more taken to that bed, from which he never again rose. His fever was rekindled with redoubled violence. That night, so eventful to Port Royal, was spent in trying every remedy which the affection and skill of his friends and physicians could devise. But the malignity of the disease baffled all their efforts. M. de Saci, who felt that the hour was come when his earthly exile was drawing to its conclusion, requested to partake of the sacrament. And with eyes sparkling, not so much with the excitement of violent fever, as with the supernatural fire of divine grace and love, he administered it to himself. Then in a most heart-affecting prayer he fervently recommended all his friends and all his disciples and spiritual children to God. All the nuns of Port Royal, and all the recluses were mentioned by name. And amongst them his kindness led him, I was told, especially to mention me. Then lying down he prepared for death. Tears of love and gratitude and humility flowed from his eyes, at the thoughts of his vileness and at the greatness of the redemption of Christ, and the inestimable price of his precious blood at which it was procured. As for me, I know it was a most precious and undeserved token, that he should deign to think at all of me at such a moment. But it seemed as though this excellent pastor, who in all things

sought to follow his blessed master's steps in life, was also to follow them in his disappearance from men. And as Jesus was parted from his disciples on the mount of Olives blessing them, so did this his servant quit his spiritual children on earth, in the act of praying a benediction from the same Jesus, upon that part of his great flock entrusted to him, yea even on the most obscure of them, as for example on myself. Many will no doubt wonder that a man of his eminent celebrity, should in the very shade and jaws of death, have thought of or mentioned such an obscure individual; but I can myself readily account for it, for the faithful pastor treading in the steps of him who is eminently the good pastor, yet more tenderly seeks out the feeble of his flock, and carries the little ones the more closely in his compassionate bosom.

'All M. de Saci's friends were thunderstruck at his sudden death; which seemed no less a death-blow to the cause of Port Royal, than a loss to friendship. But to no one perhaps was the shock so great, as to myself who had seen him eight days before in perfect health. There was not one amidst his numerous flock who did not long to go instantly to Pomponne, once more to behold him dead, at whose feet they had so long sat as disciples while he was living. But prudence peremptorily forbade this last testimony of affection. We all knew that the least symptom of such an intention would have immediately sealed the ruin of Port Royal, and the rigorous imprisonment of all its friends.

'M. de Saci had marked in his will, that he desired to be interred at Port Royal des Champs; in order that his body might rest amongst those to whom he had for so many years filled the office of director, and amongst whom his heart had ever dwelt. It was impossible to avoid passing through Paris, in translating the body from Pomponne to Port Royal. Yet the greatest fears were entertained both by those well informed of the dispositions of the court as well as by the abbess and the nuns, that it would be stopped by the police officers, were it discovered. Many ladies of distinction, especially the Duchess of Lesdiguières, had wished to give M. de Saci a testimonial of respect, by sending processions bearing torches to meet the funeral at the gate of St. Antoine, and to accompany it through the city to the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas; for the corpse was to be privately deposited there for the night, in

order to proceed the next day to Port Royal des Champs, which is distant eighteen miles from Paris. Those however who had the management of the transaction found it indispensable to avoid all publicity, since it was more than rumoured that the police were about to issue orders not to suffer the body to pass. It was on this account brought with the utmost secrecy to St. Jacques. No information was afforded but to immediate friends ; and this great and good man, who had been the means of supplying catholic christendom with the scriptures, and of effecting the conversion of so many thousands ; whose eloquence, whose piety, whose learning, whose eminent wisdom, meekness and gentleness, were in the praise of all the churches of Europe, would have been refused a sepulture by the very city which had been most eminently blessed by being the scene of his labours, had not the zeal and courage of a few faithful friends, eluded the watchful malice of his persecutors. The body was transported in the shade of dusk, and was privately deposited in St. Jacques ; whilst his friends, some of the most eminent men then in the world for piety, learning, and rank, were reduced to the necessity of assembling in various disguises, and skulking through bye-streets, not habited as mourners, to the church where they undertook to watch all night to prevent violence being offered to his remains ; and promising themselves to accompany them to the grave next day. They were however scarcely assembled in sad silence round the coffin, when tidings reached them that the vague rumours in circulation and the fears of the abbess were but too well founded. They found that in truth the death of its victim put no period to the spirit of persecution ; and that neither the spiritual bond nor the close ties of consanguinity which subsisted between M. de Saci and the house of Port Royal, would prove any protection against the brutal violence of their adversaries. The court party were resolved on preventing that monastery from receiving the sacred deposit which they had promised themselves ever to keep amongst them as a consolation to their grief and stimulus to their faith. Information was received that it was resolved to stop the body ; and that messengers were sent to Pomponne to discover if the suspected translation was intended. God however foiled the attempts of the wicked, and permitted his handmaids to receive this innocent consolation.

'Intelligence having been received that orders were actually issued by the police, it was instantly determined to remain no longer in Paris. And although it was the very depth of January, and the winter uncommonly severe, and the weather such as to render it apparently most perilous; our friends resolved, though it was then eleven o'clock at night, to set out at all hazards for Port Royal. M. de Saci's sacred body was immediately placed in a plain hearse, and they began their hazardous journey through deep snows and wind driving full in their faces. In many places the road, which is at best a bye-road, was completely choked with high drifts of snow; in others it was absolutely sheeted with ice, so that no horses could keep their footing. The roads were literally speaking impassable in any ordinary case; nor could they possibly have been traversed, but for the incredible labours and strenuous manual exertion of the very numerous friends who accompanied the hearse on foot, and whose ardent zeal had provided them with proper implements and determined them to brave every obstacle in the attempt. With every precaution, they more than once thought the drifts never could have had a passage cleared before day-break. Their difficulties were inconceivable; all his friends however reckoned as nothing the fatigue they encountered; and most justly did they esteem it as one of the highest honours and privileges of their lives, to have the favour to accompany to its long home the sacred remains of this most faithful and devoted servant of God. As it happened, the very circumstance of the roads being deemed impassable, whilst it protracted their progress and obliged them to resort to the most laborious efforts, yet probably prevented their being met on the road or stopped. After incredible difficulties, through eighteen miles of dreadful road, in midnight darkness, at about five o'clock in the morning, the hearse reached the brow of the steep wooded hill which immediately overhangs the monastery of Port Royal.

'As soon as ever the torches winding down the steep descent amongst the leafless trees, and casting a red light upon the snow, announced the approach of the funeral, it was met by a procession from the monastery. It was a heart-affecting sight to see the breathless corpse of this venerable and aged saint carried for the last time into that church, where as a boy even of six years old his devotion had so often edified

those older than himself ; where he had been consecrated to the priesthood, and on whose altar he had offered up his first sacrifice. At the great gates of the church, the coffin was met by an hundred nuns, each of whom had sat at his feet as her director. Each held a burning torch, nor could any restrain her tears, as the corpse was borne into the church, and deposited in the centre of an illuminated chapel.

‘I myself, together with a few more of M. de Saci’s friends, who had just received an intimation that the corpse would be deposited for that night at St. Jacques, were greatly surprised, on reaching that church at seven in the morning, to find that it had been transported during the night. We immediately set out on foot ; and with hearts overwhelmed with grief followed the long traces of the hearse, which, with the trampling of many feet, were deeply imprinted in the snow and apparently several hours before. Having at length arrived at Port Royal, we found his coffin lying in the church, and every preparation making with all dispatch for his immediate interment. Such strong fears still prevailed, that it was resolved not to wait until the next day to perform high mass over him. Every body was gone to hasten the preparations. So I had all the leisure to stay alone and uninterruptedly by the beloved remains of my dear and saint-like master, where I forgot the intense cold and hunger I suffered, having set out to Paris from St. Mandé without any breakfast, and having eaten nothing since. After a little while, one came to ask me to warm myself. I declined it. Then another urged me to dine, or at least take some refreshment. This I also refused. I was near M. de Saci, and near him for the last time. I could not quit him.

‘My perseverance was however doubly recompensed ; for whilst I was there a deliberation was carrying on within the monastery, whether they should not give him an ecclesiastical sepulture, arrayed in his full sacerdotal vestments. There was only one obstacle in the way, which was the doubt that suggested itself how the face might appear when uncovered, as he had now been in his coffin six or seven days. It became necessary to ascertain this, before this mode of interment was finally decided upon. Accordingly I had not been long seated at the foot of my beloved master, when the door communicating with the nun’s choir opened, and Madame de Fontperlius

entered the church to preside at this operation. Immediately all the church doors were closed, and a carpenter approached the coffin with a hammer and other implements. As he gave the heavy stroke which wrenched the fastenings, I felt an awe and bitter pain at, even from a principle of affection, violating the sacred and (as I had ever held them) the inviolable rites of sepulture. The lid was removed. I, his pupil, was the first who interrupted the spontaneous pause, and passed my hand into the coffin, to unveil from the dreary mansions of death a visage which had been consigned to its abode for ever, and which had already passed so many days there. As soon as the winding sheet was unfolded and the face cloth turned back, that holy, reverend, and placid countenance appeared once more; and in no respect was it altered. The deep peace and stillness of death which then reigned there, seemed but as the peace and tranquillity which grace had imprinted on it during life. The waxen clay seemed yet to bear the impress with which the spirit of God, whose temple it once was, had sealed it. Every heart and eye was riveted on that revered and tranquil countenance, which seemed even in its peaceful sleep to breathe that deep humility, modesty and unction, which his aspect while living was wont to inspire in every heart. My eyes, as well as those of all the very few allowed to be present, seemed as if they could not be satiated with gazing on him, whom each one would have desired ever to see before him, and whom we had none imagined we should ever more have seen on earth. Where was that fearful awe so generally inspired by the sight of death? But he fell asleep in Jesus, and it seemed as if a ray of the glory of that heaven which had just opened to receive his immortal spirit, yet lingered around its late abode. We contemplated him again and again, and were ready to speak as though he were still living and could still hear us; and his disciples felt as if they wished once more to embrace their well known master, but a secret reverence withheld them; and warned each heart that the blest spirits, now enrolled amongst the sons of light and the spirit of just men made perfect, must henceforth be loved with an affection like himself, eternal, but freed from mortal frailty and weakness.

His remains were then arrayed for the last time, in the sacerdotal vestments. The usual psalms were sung, and the

aspersions and incensings customary on such occasions were performed. After which, the folding doors communicating from the chancel into the nuns' choir were thrown open, that he might be carried to the spot which had been marked out within its walls for his sepulture : a spot purposely selected by the nuns, that the pastor at whose feet they had so often sat might repose immediately in their choir. We carried there his corpse arrayed in priest's vestments, and on an open bier, through a long avenue of holy nuns ; above an hundred and twenty of whom were arranged on each side, every one with a burning taper in her hand, to meet him at the gates. Their eyes, though so long turned from every earthly object, could not, although bathed in tears, avoid fixing themselves on those sacred remains which slowly passed before each of them : and each tried to retain as long as possible (in the little pauses we purposely made) the features of that holy countenance they were to behold no more. How distinctly do I at this distance of time remember the very least circumstances of that memorable day. I still seem to see the long row of nuns on each side, and the profound respect, marked by the deep inclinations every one made as the uncovered bier passed before her. And when at last it reached the open grave, how well do I remember the principal nuns, as they disposed it to descend into the earth, each reverently bending the knee, as she touched his hand respectfully with her lips ; whilst the full choir continued the funeral chant, with a gravity most deeply impressive, and which I reverence whenever I recal it. For my own part I was so overcome, that I felt as if my very heart and soul were buried in the grave with him. Surely, O Lord, it was a marvelous power of thy grace, by which thou didst in that day so rule the hearts of thine handmaids, as to enable them worthily to shew respect to thy highly favoured servant. There was not one in all that large assemblage, who, instead of uttering songs of praise, would not have willingly indulged a bursting heart in shedding floods of tears. Nor was one voice lifted up in those noble anthems of praise, which, had not thine especial grace prevailed over nature, would not have been suffocated in sighing and in sorrow. But they were the children of grace ; and thy grace it was that enabled them to mourn their spiritual loss, by listening rather to the voice of the spirit than to that

of natural affection. Nay, perhaps the very depth of their love and reverence for their spiritual father, helped to restrain their tears and loosen their tongues; that they might honour the funeral of the departed saint, in a manner worthy the fulness of faith of him whom they mourned. Their admirable abbess, the M. Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, a worthy successor of her aunt the abbess Marie Angélique, told me that "she thought it unworthy of him, to whom they rendered the last honours, to weep his entrance into the joys of his Lord." I well remember the next day after the funeral, when I had the honour of waiting on the abbess before I returned to St. Mandé; she left all her affairs in order to sit with me, and speak to me fully respecting M. de Saci; and to request me to draw up a memorial of every particular, which my long and intimate connection with this great man had given me an opportunity of knowing. But my connection with him was too near to be able at that time to speak without deep sorrow. I expressed my affection to my dearest master with much grief; when this admirable abbess answered, in a voice grave and determined, but yet, as I well remember, almost smothered by the violence of the effort she exercised over herself, "My brother, we have now committed to earth, that of our dear father which was but earthly; it remains that in our own hearts we suffer to pass away on the stream of time, those feelings which God has appointed only for time."

Such was the conduct of Port Royal under this heavy stroke, which bereaved them at once of their main spiritual prop, and temporal counselor. Scarcely, however, were Port Royal and its friends beginning to recover from the stupefaction with which they had been struck by the sudden death of M. de Saci, when a second calamity equally sudden and yet more wholly unlooked for befel them. They had in less than twenty days after to mourn the only bereavement which could have been esteemed a yet more heavy stroke than the one they had just experienced. Twenty days after this loss, the public were informed of the death of the abbess Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, the cousin of M. de Saci; and who, placed at the helm of Port Royal, as the worthy successor of the Mères Angélique and Agnès, was the hope and refuge of the whole community. Her loss was no doubt consequent on that of M. de Saci. Whilst the heart and will of this truly admirable and inestimable

able woman were devoted with an undivided purpose to God, her constitution had received a shock in the death of her director, from which it never recovered. Outwardly she appeared unaltered ; she yielded to no unavailing expressions of sorrow, nor were her duties ever interrupted. Yet it soon became evident, that she who had so courageously been enabled ten years before to bear the loss of M. d'Andilli, her natural father, would not now survive that of her aged spiritual one. She expired on the 29th of January, 1684, aged fifty-nine years and two months, of which she had led a professedly religious life for more than forty years.

The reverend M. Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld d'Andilli was born on the 28th of November, 1624. At the early age of six years, her father placed her in the school of Port Royal, to be educated by her two aunts, the Mères Angélique and Agnès. Here, even at this tender age, she appeared under religious impressions. When she had been there about a year, hearing that she had another little sister just born, and being told they were then five, she replied, as if she had been on the eve of her profession, "You say so, because you count us who are placed in this monastery ; but remember, we desire to have done with the things of this world, and to be no longer reckoned amongst the people of the world." Even at the early age of twelve years, she was distinguished by so acute a penetration and so enlarged a genius, that the two abbesses often recommended her to the prayers of their friends in these terms, "Beseech the Lord to bestow upon her a preparation of heart to serve him ; for if she does no good, she will assuredly do great evil." She entered the noviciate at the age of seventeen, and applied herself with great fervour to fulfil all her duties. She was particularly led to practise great austerities, which no doubt inured her to the hardships she had afterwards to endure in the close imprisonment she was destined to experience for the truth. Soon after her profession she became mistress of the scholars, and afterwards sub-prioress and mistress of the novices. In the year 1661, the storm burst upon Port Royal, during which, as we have already seen, her aunt, the M. Angélique, departed this life. Her niece was most tenderly attached to her. But her faith failed not. Her occupations were not interrupted, and no complaint escaped her lips ; though no loss could be more sensibly felt. One day.

a nun observing the tears trickling down her cheeks, as she sought to proceed with tranquillity in her occupation, said, "Ah! my sister, I do not wonder you feel our irreparable loss!" She answered, "A christian should be ashamed of mourning any loss as IRREPARABLE; since he possesses God, who can more than fill the place of any and of every creature!"

The S. Angélique de St. Jean was the support of the whole house, in the period which succeeded the death of the M. Angélique. Her singleness of mind, her wisdom, her strength of character, and her talent for business, rendered her services of the greatest importance. She was the very soul of the house for the wisdom of her counsels, the solidity of her replies, and the force of her writings. In the midst of all the tempests which shook Port Royal, a truly sublime faith enabled her to remain in a perfectly steadfast course of conduct. In 1664, she was closely imprisoned with the nuns of the annunciation, in the quarter of St. Antoine, near Paris; where she had much to suffer for the sake of the truth, being reduced to a complete solitude, and a deprivation of all spiritual assistance, as before related. On the 2nd of July, 1665, the imprisoned nuns were restored to Port Royal. On the 13th of May, 1666, her cousin M. de Saci, was sent to the Bastille. She wrote him a letter of congratulation, on being counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. At the end of 1668, the pacification of Clement the 9th took place and the captives were liberated. On the 20th of February, 1671, the M. Agnès expired, and on the 3d of August, 1678, the M. Angélique de St. Jean became abbess of Port Royal. Ten months afterwards the death of the Duchess of Longueville took place; and immediately after, the persecution which overwhelmed Port Royal burst forth anew. The M. Angélique de St Jean was animated by the spirit of the M. Angélique and the M. Agnès; to which was added a brilliancy of talent and intellectual powers, peculiarly her own. In nothing did she appear to partake of the weakness of her sex. Her very superior genius gained her the admiration of the first men of the age. The unction and piety which flowed from her lips penetrated the heart, whilst her learning and talents delighted those who either heard her converse, attended her exhortations as abbess, or read her works. A profound study of the scriptures, a perfect acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, a familiar knowledge of the

Greek and Latin fathers in their native tongues, added to her discourses a weight, perhaps never before equalled in any of her sex. Her works still edify and delight those conversant with them. Besides the rare endowments which peculiarly fitted her for her post as an abbess, she was likewise gifted with much information not common to her sex. She had a scientific acquaintance with natural philosophy, with medicine and surgery, and with the principles of musical composition. She also eminently excelled in modeling wax, and many pieces of hers yet remain as monuments of her very rare genius and skill in this art. The motive which induced her to exercise this talent is worthy of record. After the revenues of Port Royal had been unjustly seized, and the nuns were harassed by so many vexatious requisitions that they had scarcely wherewith to maintain themselves, she practised this art to enable her, without detriment to her community or her other poor, to provide for the maintenance of several ladies who were attached to the cause of the Stuarts, (several of whom were protestants) and who found themselves in destitute circumstances in France. In all the works of this excellent and admirable woman, the same character of deep piety and of capacious intellect prevailed. They all bear the stamp of humility and self-abasement, without meanness ; of unshaken firmness, without pride ; of an exact and tender conscience, without littleness. Her total absence from the vanity too often inspired by superior talents, her renunciation of self-will, and her profound contempt for all worldly things, the austerity of her penance, and unshaken firmness of her mind, caused her to be regarded, even by her enemies, as a prodigy of piety and talent. One anecdote of this admirable abbess must not be omitted. The Duke of Luynes, on his second marriage, made a present of his seat at Vaumurier to the monastery of Port Royal des Champs. It consisted of a noble mansion house, a spacious park and productive gardens, and exactly joined on to the grounds of Port Royal ; and as it was bestowed at the time that Port Royal de Paris, the gift of her own family, and two-thirds of their revenue were so unjustly wrested from them, it promised to be truly valuable, by forming a large addition to their income in a time of most perplexing and distressing necessity. The Dauphin, being one day on a hunting expedition near Port Royal, was so struck with the beauty

of the place, that he determined to ask the king to demand it of the nuns, for a very handsome remuneration. But the abbess, having heard that the purpose to which he meant to apply it was an unworthy one, did not choose for the sake of any remuneration, to expose the house to be inhabited by such a person as the Dauphin meant to place there. She therefore, before the king made the request known, sent a number of workmen, and had the house completely demolished even to the very foundations ; preferring the loss of so considerable a property, to the connivance at evil, or to treating the king with disrespect by a refusal. The king having heard of this noble action praised it in the highest terms. Such is a short sketch of this admirable nun, "to whom," say her French biographers, "no praises can do justice ; and of whom we shall say no more from an impossibility to speak worthily of her." We shall simply give a short sketch of her illness and death from an eye witness, who writes thus :—

She especially venerated M. de Sacy, who had been her spiritual guide from her youth upwards. His death was the most painful blow that could have befallen her. On hearing of his decease, she retired to her own room, and after some time spent alone in prayer, she resumed her duties with seriousness, but yet without appearing cast down. When in the hour of recreation some of the nuns appeared overwhelmed with grief, she said, "God has indeed taken our father to himself ! He is now beholding his glory !" Whilst our Lord has called our beloved father to this vision, his spirit, I think, calls us to admire that plentitude of wisdom and of power and mercy, by which he can raise up instruments on earth when it pleases him ; or take them away, and with equal care carry on his work without them. He stops or turns the streams of living water at his pleasure ; the spring of his love, mercy and wisdom is an abyss, ever equally unfathomable, and a fountain which ever equally flows." This thought, and the profound resignation she desired to feel for the will of God, prevented one murmuring expression. She performed all her duties as before. Nevertheless her health sank under this overpowering burden ; and it was obvious that like St. Paul, she was in a strait between two, longing to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better ; and yet desirous to remain for the benefit of her sisters.

'She had spent the day on which she was seized with her mortal illness, as usual, having been at matins in the night, and having occupied herself in her various duties all the morning. Amongst other occupations, she had given a peculiarly excellent instruction to the nuns. She employed the intervening time until vespers in visiting the sick. As the abbess went down from the infirmary to vespers, she necessarily passed the tomb of M. de Saci, which had only been closed twelve days before. On this tomb she for a time prostrated herself, and remained in prayer; on rising up, she felt a sudden and violent pain in her side, as if she had received a heavy blow. She however went in to vespers, supposing it might be owing to the constrained posture in which she had been. But in the midst of the office she was seized with a shivering fit, and although she finished the service, her voice faltered so perceptibly that an apprehension was entertained of what really followed. The abbess herself well understood this stroke as a call to prepare for her removal into the eternal world. "If I considered myself only," said she to the prioress, "earnestly should I desire to depart and to be with Christ; but the compassion I feel for this poor little bereft flock cannot permit me to be indifferent to the trouble and difficulties in which it must be involved, by the event of my death before my triennial expires." Nevertheless as she trusted that if God called her to himself he would take charge of her community, she only thought of giving him thanks for the favour she expected. Her disposition appeared by her expressions to a sister who wished to take off her veil, and to help her to go to bed. "My dear sister," said she, "let me restore it to God, who gave it to me forty years since tomorrow. When we enter into a serious illness, and one from which in all probability we shall not arise, we must begin by preparing to restore our veil to him who gave it." She then said the whole of the *Te Deum*, although her sisters besought her not on account of the shivering and anguish which she suffered. Seeing the consternation of the community, she said, "We can more easily submit to God than to man, because we have a full assurance that he does all well. Let us only wait his will, in a child-like spirit. He is the Lord." Then entering the bed from which she never arose, she added: "Above all, my children, let us never forget to sing the song of Moses

and the Lamb, to bless the Lord at all times, and let his praise be continually in our mouths." The shivering continued for four hours, with the most agonizing pain. Before she received the last sacraments, she wished to beg forgiveness of the community for all wherein she might have erred. The prioress perceived it, and did all in her power to prevent, and to urge the confessor to prevent her. But she persisted, and made her excuses in the most humble terms. After receiving the sacraments, she wished to collect her thoughts; but the violence of the fever preventing it, she desired that the hundred and third psalm might be read to her. Her lungs then became so oppressed, that she no longer spoke, and her mind began to wander. Nevertheless she seemed even in this state, to preserve the same direction of heart. For the death of a young man being mentioned in her presence, who had formerly been at Port Royal, but who had again returned to the world, she was so overcome with grief, as to appear for a time suffocated; but at length recovering herself, she exclaimed, "Oh what do you say! Oh terrible and afflicting news!" The nuns in vain tried to comfort her, thinking she knew not what she said, as she had never seen this man; but she said, "It is his soul that I regret, it is his soul! O my sisters, I am on my DEATH-BED; it is *now* I feel the INFINITE VALUE OF THE SOUL!" She often spoke of him, and always with the same grief. The day before her death, all remedies being unavailing, she said to the community with her usual tranquillity: "See, my dear sisters, in how short a time death can call us away. Do you not observe how changed is my voice, with which I can scarcely make you understand? and hear the rattling in my throat!" Some time after, she requested that she might not be spoken to concerning any earthly affair, that she might think of God only. Her mind being now clear and restored, she felt pain in seeing the tears and bitter grief of the community. With much effort to speak, she said: "My dear sisters, we must not look to consequences. Your hearts must follow me up to the throne of God; mine must not be drawn down with yours, to the concerns of earth." She then tried again to exhort her community, but was unable. The prioress, having assembled a part of the nuns in the evening in her room, besought her with tears, as their abbess, to give her benediction both to

those present and those absent. Her only answer was lifting up her eyes and hands to heaven, in the words of the Song of Solomon, "O ye daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you that ye stir not up, nor awake my beloved till he please," which verse she repeated in Latin. The prioress represented to her that she spoke for herself only, according to her longing desire to go to her Lord; but that her community besought her to have compassion on them too, and bestow on them some words of consolation and instruction. She only answered by the preceding words of the same song, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraceth me." She was unable to say more. Some time after, the prioress seemed stupified with the excess of grief; and when she changed for death, they seemed not to know what it was, and inquired of the nurse. The dying abbess replied: "It is the voice of my beloved; behold he sheweth himself! he sheweth himself through the lattice; he saith unto me, Rise up, my fair one, come away." The community being again assembled in her room, they besought her with tears, to give them her benediction. She accordingly lifted up her hand to do so, but was unable to speak. She then opened a psalter, that was presented to her, and made them a sign to recite the seventy-third psalm, which seemed beautifully appropriate to the situation of Port Royal at that time. She soon after fell asleep in the Lord, without having lost her recollection for one single moment. During all that time, her countenance was almost radiant with the expression of peace, sweetness, and heavenly joy, with which her soul seemed enwrapt; and the same expression after death still remained.

The Mère Angélique de St. Jean, expired on the 29th of January, 1684. After her decease the M. du Fargis, her prioress, was chosen abbess; she appointed as her prioress, the M. St. Thecla Racine, aunt to the celebrated tragedian. Nor was this overwhelming blow, the conclusion of the catalogue of disasters, which at this time overwhelmed Port Royal. M. de Luzançi, the brother of the Mère Angélique de St. Jean, was at Pomponne, when his cousin M. de Saci, expired in his arms. At his death, he appeared bereft of every outward comfort. He however promised himself some relief, in the correspondence of his sister. For her he had always entertained a peculiar veneration; and his fervent piety, and great gentle-

ness and self distrust, made him feel the want of reposing his tender spirit on a character of her masculine strength, and exalted but matured holiness. When however the totally unexpected news of her dying state arrived it was like a thunder clap. He was so struck that he remained for a considerable time motionless, and was even in a stupor, incapable of speaking or of hearing. At length awaking as from a trance, he ordered his horse, and with his utmost speed reached Port Royal, just in time to receive his sister's last breath. On his return from Port Royal to M. de Pomponne his brother, when he entered the room, where as a child his sister Angélique had so often been, and which his spiritual father, M. de Saci, occupied, he felt as one bereft. The two last props of his house were gone. He could not speak for some time ; till looking round at their vacant seats wishfully, he said, "To whom now shall we go ?" Then suddenly stretching out his arms towards heaven, and with an almost supernatural animation sparkling through his tears he added, "Even to thee, O Lord ! Thou hast the words of eternal life." He sat down, but a burning fever immediately broke out. "He was taken to his bed," (says Fontaine :) "and wishing to regulate his affairs, sent to me to consult with me about them. Two days after, I arrived ; and going to ask how he was, and passing by the church of St. Eustache, what was my shock to see his corpse exposed there on a bier, previously to its removal to Port Royal des Champs. He died on Feb. 10th. 1684, aged 61 ; eleven days after his sister. The S. Flescelles de Brégy also received in the death of M. de Saci, and of her abbess, her death blow ; she followed them on April 1st of the same year. Nor did her friend the S. St. Christine Briquet long survive them. She had been the pupil of both these estimable persons, even from infancy, as well as the particular friend of the S. de Brégy : and like all the three, she was distinguished for her talent as well as her piety. She applied herself after their death to arrange an edition of M. de Saci's spiritual letters, and of the works of the abbess Angélique de St. Jean ; which being concluded, she expressed that she knew her work on earth was done ; and accordingly died, on the 30th of November 1689, full of faith and good works.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Dispersion.

THE Cardinal de Noailles had long been harassed by the court party on the one side, and the Jesuits on the other, to issue a decree for the immediate suppression and extinction of the abbey of Port Royal des Champs. He was a man of a timid and feeble mind, susceptible of pious and humane feeling, but incapable of acting with firmness and discision. He most painfully felt the part which he was even persecuted to perform in this business. Good, but wavering; abhorring persecution, but unable to resist when it was directed against himself; too humane willingly to oppress, but too feeble to succour the innocent of his flock by the firm defence which he as their pastor owed them; he became an awful exemplification of the common observation, that the weak are often made to perform as tools, acts of injustice which the wicked who direct them would never dare to perpetrate as principals.

One anecdote respecting the part he took in this affair, will clearly shew his character. It is related by M. Thomassin, the cardinal's law agent. About the time that the question of the intended destruction of Port Royal was agitated, but before it was decreed in council, the cardinal one day sent for M. Thomassin, and on his arrival at the palace, thus addressed him: "Sir, the destruction of Port Royal being decided upon, you must draw up and present me a petition to that effect." M. Thomassin waited till the conclusion of the cardinal's speech, and then respectfully but firmly represented to him that he was deceived, and that in fact Port Royal was wholly different from the account which he had received; which was in truth only the representation of one particular party, who had long been its avowed enemy; and he concluded by saying, that he was surprised his Eminence did not see how he endangered his own salvation, by lending the sanction of his

name to a deed which could only dishonour him. "Yes, my Lord," continued he, "it is only persons jealous of your very high reputation, who would seek to engage your Lordship in such an undertaking. They see plainly that the world highly reverences your virtues and admires your character: they cannot attack the orthodoxy of your doctrine, and they wish to tarnish the lustre of so many excellences, and to serve their own malice, by endeavouring to draw you in and to make you their agent, in an odious and detestable enterprize which they are by far too prudent to venture upon in their own persons; and of which they will afterwards exculpate themselves by throwing all the odium upon your Eminence." The cardinal appeared struck with these observations, and after a moment's pause replied, "Sir, make me a memorial of all you have just now advanced; and of all the reasons which ought to induce a suspension of the destruction of Port Royal. But let it be drawn up immediately; I cannot wait, for I am pressed on all hands. They absolutely give me no peace."

Accordingly, at the end of two or three days, M. Thomasin presented the memorial ready drawn up to the cardinal, who perused it to the end; after which he thanked him for opening his eyes to the snare which was laid for him.

The enemies of Port Royal, who were very impatient for its demolition, did not fail to visit the cardinal in a few days to discover how the affair went on. They were beyond measure surprized and chagrined to see the total change in his disposition; especially as he told them the reasons on which it was founded. They then saw that the only way of triumphing over his opposition would be by intimidating him. They accordingly told him that the king was much bent upon it, and that he would be much displeased at seeing it objected to by the archbishop of Paris alone; and that when he should be called upon for a justification of his refusal, it would be too ridiculous to see his Eminence, the archbishop of the first province of the kingdom and a cardinal of the holy college, exculpating himself by pleading submission to the fancies of his secretary.

The archbishop, piqued by the sarcasm which accompanied this observation, habitually timorous, fearful also of the double humiliation of ridicule, completely wearied by his enemies and in complete doubt which side was true, finally agreed to comply

with all they required. He then sent for M. Thomassin, and in a tone evidently chagrined and constrained but yet decided, and as if to get rid of the business at once, said that the affair was finally decided upon, and therefore the petition must be drawn up without further delay. M. Thomassin respectfully testified his astonishment at so unexpected and decided a resolution; and asked his Eminence, whether he had taken any measures to ascertain the truth of those assertions which were to be alleged as the very basis of the petition? He also added an inquiry, whether his Eminence had found any reason to doubt the truth of the facts, contained in the memorial, which he had the honour to present to him some days before. The Cardinal replied with evident impatience, "What is all this to the purpose? The affair is decided amongst the privy counselors. There is nothing left but to execute it." M. Thomassin was about to speak, when the archbishop, interrupting him with a quickness of manner and a voice of thunder quite unusual to him, said, "Sir, I am issuing a command, not asking advice; nor is it your place to offer it unasked. It was justly observed to me, that you were a very young man, and that it did not become me to be led by you." M. Thomassin again made an attempt to speak, when the Cardinal again closed his mouth with these memorable words: "Sir, I insist on being obeyed. Draw out the petition. It shall be done." To which M. Thomassin, bowing submissively, and then standing with modest firmness, in the most respectful manner replied: "My Lord, your Eminence is resolved to do it, and Thomassin is equally resolved *not* to do it." Then with tears in his eyes, and much emotion (for he was sincerely attached to the cardinal,) he continued, "No, my Lord, it shall never be said that your faithful servant Thomassin has lent his pen to your Eminence's enemies, who only plot and combine to dishonour you." Thus the interview closed.

On his dismissal from the cardinal, M. Thomassin, very much agitated, repaired to the church of St. Nicholas du Louvre, of which he was Provost. He immediately went and kneeled at the foot of the high altar. He staid there above an hour; during which time, though he had blasted all his worldly prospects, he declared he felt a peace which cannot be expressed, and an awful, but ineffably glorious and joyful sense of the presence of God, which pervaded his whole soul.

Whilst he was there, he heard the bells ring for evening salutation ; he felt so inexpressible a sense of peace and happiness, that the persons who came in to prayers and went out, appeared to him as though he saw them in a dream : he seemed already to enjoy, by a lively influence, the holy presence of God, the society of angels, and the happiness of the saints. He did not rise from his knees, till the dark shadows of evening scarcely shewed the white dresses of the Sisters of Charity glimmering in the remote distance, and till the last solitary lamp was extinguished.

Whilst such were the contemplations of M. Thomassin, the Cardinal de Noailles was very differently employed. It was by no means difficult to find other ecclesiastics, more pliable and less conscientious than M. Thomassin. Accordingly the order was given to another person ; the petition was drawn out and presented ; and the destruction of Port Royal was soon after formally decreed by the council. On the 11th of July, 1709, the Cardinal de Noailles passed the decree for the suppression and extinction of the monastery of Port Royal des Champs. On the 29th of October, of the same year, at half-past seven in the morning, the nuns on coming from mass were gone to the chapter, according to custom. A message was brought to the mother prioress,* desiring her immediate attendance in the parlour. She there found a man come in great haste from the surrounding woods, to tell her that a long file of carriages seemed proceeding toward the house, and multitudes of armed horsemen appeared on the neighbouring heights. A moment after arrived M. d'Argenson, counselor of state, and with him a lieutenant of the police, accompanied by two commissioners and other gentlemen ; with a band of constables and archers on horseback. On entering, he ordered the key of the outward door to be given to a sentry, whom he established there. He also posted an archer at the door of the turn ; one at the door of the church, and so on in other places, whence there might be any communication with the interior of the convent. Presently there appeared on all the wooded heights which enclose the beautiful valley of Port Royal, troops of horsemen, amounting to some hundreds ; and instantly the whole wall of enclosure

* At this time there was no abbess ; the king having refused permission to elect another, after the death of the M. de Ninville, in 1706.—*Ed.*

was on all sides invested by armed men. All the avenues of approach, to the distance of half a league, were guarded by armed archers on horseback. The greatest part of these men had in truth arrived the day before ; at which time this expedition was originally intended to have been effected ; but the weather was so unusually stormy, and the rain so violent and uninterrupted, that M. d'Argenson was obliged to remain at Paris, and defer it until the next day. The horsemen meanwhile had orders to keep their march a profound secret, and by no means to approach the monastery ; so that they found themselves not a little embarrassed how to pass the night. They therefore dispersed in various directions ; some went to lodge at Magny, whilst others found asylums for the night at Montigny, Voisins, Chevreuse, and even as far as Dampierre. Many of them, not being able to obtain shelter, were compelled to remain concealed all night in the woods about Port Royal, drenched with rain and exposed to the fury of the tremendous storms. At length however the weather cleared, and they contrived to light a blazing fire, near which they remained till the dawn of day.

After having posted his centinels, M. d'Argenson stopped all the servants he met ; took down their respective names and offices, and at the same time commanded them not to stir from the place he appointed for them. He then went to the turn, and asked to speak to the prioress and the steward. He was conducted to the great parlour, and a moment after they appeared at the grate. M. d'Argenson mentioned his own name, and told them he came authorized by his majesty. He read to them the beginning only of the decree he came to execute ; which was dated three days before, on the twenty-sixth of October, and which required of the nuns, in the king's name, that they should open their door to M. d'Argenson, and remit and deliver up to him all their papers and title deeds. He then demanded entrance, to fulfil his orders. The prioress replied that she would immediately open the door of enclosure ; and she went to the turn herself to receive him. He entered with the two commissioners, followed by a secretary who carried a little tin box. He desired to be conducted to the chapter-house, and ordered the whole community to be summoned. All the nuns then entered with their large veils let down. He counted over their number several times ; then

placed himself on the abbess's throne, the commissioners taking their seats at his side. He then read to the community at large so much of the decree as had been previously read to the prioress ; and added, that the further pleasure of the king should be made known to them, after the article already recited should have been complied with. He then commanded all the deeds to be instantly delivered up to him, and asked them if they had not suppressed any. The prioress answered in the negative ; and said that if he would give himself the trouble of accompanying her to the place where they were kept, she would deliver them up to him, which was accordingly done. He was then conducted to the strong closet, in which were the title deeds and archives of the monastery. He affixed his seal to it, as well as to several heavy chests, and to the strong box.

During this expedition, only the prioress, sub-prioress, and procuratrix were present ; for the nuns, hearing the hour of tierce strike, had left the chapter-house, and were gone into the choir. Little did they suspect, that it was the very last time they would ever meet there to celebrate the praises of God. As it was Tuesday, it so happened that the psalm for the day was the 25th. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," &c., than which scarcely one more appropriate to the peculiarity of their circumstances could have been found. Another singular coincidence also happened on the same day. The two lamps of the dormitory, which had burnt without interruption from the re-establishment of the monastery, were unaccountably both found extinguished.

After tierce, the nuns dispersed to their various occupations, or to their cells. They had however scarcely reached them when M. d'Argenson, having returned to the chapter-house, recalled the community. When they were all assembled, both choir-nuns and lay-sisters, he told them that he had reason to congratulate them on the prompt submission with which they had obeyed the king's command ; but that he was, however reluctantly, constrained to declare the further orders of his majesty, which were much more painful and rigorous than those they had already submitted to, and which would require, on their part, infinitely more hard sacrifices ; but which, nevertheless, must be absolutely obeyed. He then ordered the remainder of the decree to be read ; which purported "that the king, for several reasons, on mature delibera-

tion, and for the good of the state, ordered all the nuns of Port Royal des Champs to be immediately separated from each other ; and dispersed in different religious houses out of the diocese of Paris."

After a pause, the prioress said, that at least she had hoped they would have been sent two and two ; being mostly aged and infirm. He replied that that could not be. The prioress after another pause then asked, how long a period would be allowed them to prepare for such a journey, in such a season of the year, (it being more inclement than had been known for two centuries) and for their last and final separation. He answered, that their dispersion must take place without delay. Some of the nuns replied, that they had scarcely had time to go to their cells since mass, and that it would unavoidably take some time to put up what was indispensably necessary for their journey. With much difficulty, M. d'Argenson was prevailed upon to allow them half a quarter of an hour for their preparation : but added that he should follow them, to see that they carried away no papers. He then opened the box brought by the secretary ; from which he took a paper, containing a list of the various places of exile, and a number of double packets, ticketed, containing money to defray the expense of the journey of each nun ; and another sum to pay her first quarter's board, in the convent where she was to be placed. M. d'Argenson destined Blois to the M. prioress herself ; and then filled up the other blanks, applying to her for the names of the different nuns.

The community meanwhile stood around, listening to their sentences in profound silence ; and still keeping their large black veils let down over their faces. Neither sigh nor murmur was heard, nor did one weak tear fall to betray the dignity of their constancy, or to impeach the perfect humility of their resignation and submission to the divine will. One indeed fainted, and another who had been bled the day before felt her arm open ; but M. d'Argenson would not suffer either of them for an instant to quit the room, till he had narrowly examined whether there were any imposture.

At length it became necessary for the nuns to go, to make up their packages. Each of these, as it was tied up, was brought into the chapter-house and ticketed. Meanwhile the nuns staid in the chapter with the bailiffs, constables and

archers, with whom it was thronged; M. d'Argenson, in the mean time, standing himself in the passage to the dormitory, in order to inspect the contents of every bundle as it was handed out. The nuns were so hurried, that they had not time to take one half of what was absolutely and indispensably needful; and during the examination, several of the packets were so unsorted and mixed, that not a few went to the wrong places.

When M. d'Argenson had finished his examination, he asked the stewardess for her accounts. Then the nuns, who in the midst of their own extremity never forgot their wonted beneficence, spoke to M. d'Argenson of their old servants, most of whom had long and faithfully served them from early youth even to hoary hairs; they also recommended to him the poor; as well as some old domestics and others, who being past labour were maintained by the house; the prioress asking him how he proposed to provide for their latter days. M. d'Argenson replied, that it was vexatious, but that it would be time enough to consider of that, when they were gone. Saying this, he took the keys of enclosure, and put them in the hands of an archer. He then again entered the chapter-house, followed by a troop of bailiffs and archers, amounting to above thirty; who, with those already there, completely filled the room. Besides these, there were others in the outer court guarding the servants; without counting the numbers who invested the whole wall of enclosure, the hills, and all the avenues of approach; so that there were nearly three hundred men armed and mounted, merely to disperse a few nuns.

The nuns, seeing they were now so near quitting their beloved seclusion, no human help being at hand, and no pitying eye turned to them, and the archers and bailiffs now fast thronging in finally to disperse them, some of them approached their prioress and said to her, "What, my dear mother, shall we quit our home without once protesting, or making any legal act of appeal?" She replied, "My dear daughters, as all is done by the authority of *lettres-de-cachets*, there remains no legal power of appeal. Our path then is clear; to submit with resignation." They then with one accord threw themselves at her feet to implore her blessing, tenderly embraced her, and said no more.

During this time, M. d'Argenson was giving the necessary orders for their speedy departure. It was now nearly one o'clock, and not any of the community had yet broken their fast. The prioress represented this to the magistrate, and asked him whether it would not be well for them to go a few minutes into the refectory. "No, no," replied he, "but you can bring something here." Some bread and wine were brought into the chapter-house; but nobody would touch it except one nun, whom M. d'Argenson absolutely constrained to take some, because she was in the most urgent want of it.

Till this time the carriages had remained without. The lieutenant of the police then gave orders that they should drive in; the court was immediately full of carriages, archers, soldiers, and bailiffs. Meanwhile, all the surrounding villages and neighbourhood had been alarmed at so unusual a movement; and the farmers, villagers, cottagers and poor, all hastened to watch, though at a distance, what was doing; so that the heights of all the surrounding hills were thronged with an immense concourse of all ages and descriptions, more especially by the poor, who for above a century had been indebted to the charity of Port Royal. All this multitude awaited in silent curiosity and expectation the development of the extraordinary scene before them. As soon, however, as the empty carriages drove into the yard, one universal cry of sorrow and indignation was raised. The poor rushed down in troops; some weeping, and exclaiming that they were about to deprive them of their nursing mothers, and beseeching that they might be left; others thronging to see their faces once more; some howling dreadfully; others silently throwing themselves on their knees, and looking up to heaven, as though to call for aid; others again with mournful cries and frantic gestures shrieking, "Mercy, mercy, have mercy on the poor! do you intend to starve the poor, by taking away their mothers and their only refuge?"

Their lamentations, however, were vain. The nuns were at length compelled to go. The prioress, with a calmness and resignation which was the gift of God, lost not for a moment her presence of mind. No mark of weakness escaped her. She staid till the last; and as M. d'Argenson himself led each nun to the carriage, she gave to each her last blessing and a word of exhortation and consolation. Carriage

after carriage then filed off, each with an armed escort, through the lines of the poor, who loudly sobbing bid them farewell with frantic grief, or kneeling with uplifted and streaming eyes implored a blessing on them. Twelve carriages thus went, destined to Blois, Rouen, Chartres, Mantes, Meaux, Amiens, Compeigne, Autun, Mont Cénis and other places.

All the servants, who had been detained captive the whole day, were then turned out of doors, without provision, shelter, or reward. To one very aged man indeed, who had faithfully served the nuns gratuitously, they gave *twenty-five pence*, the only remuneration for fifty years' service.

We will now follow the nuns to their various exiles. The first carriage which departed was that for Autun. It conveyed the S. Sainte Sophie de Flescelles, and S. Lucie de St. Pepin. The first, on stepping into the carriage, bade one more adieu to her sisters, saying, "My dear sisters, let us above all arm ourselves with that invincible shield of faith, which is able to quench every fiery dart." The wife of one of the bailiffs accompanied them by way of attendant and guard. She declared, that instead of letting drop one single murmuring word, the nuns immediately disposed themselves to prayer. They experienced many inconveniences on the road, not only from the hardships necessarily attendant on the severity of the season, but from the rigour of M. d'Argenson's orders; amongst other things, they were refused attendance on divine worship, and on their arrival at the inns immediately put under lock and key. In reply to the rudeness with which the guards who accompanied the carriage performed their office, the S. Lucie de St. Pepin mildly answered, "My Saviour has been a prisoner before me, and that for our salvation: I bless God for vouchsafing me the favour of having any, the least part in his lot, or fellowship with him in his sufferings." At length they arrived at the monastery of the visitation, where the S. Lucie de St. Pepin was to stay, and where those who received her as a prisoner soon learnt to honour her as a saint.

The next day, the two nuns took the most affectionate and affecting leave of each other, as persons expecting to meet no more on this side of eternity; and solemnly exhorting each other to be faithful even to the end. They then separated; the S. Sophie continuing her journey to Mont Cénis, where, after passing through many trials and vexations, Mde. de

Rosebureau, the abbess, declared that Providence had bestowed on them his best gift, in the example of their dear sister of Port Royal, whose conduct had been a source of edification to the whole house.

Afterwards, two other carriages went for St. Denis, with lay-sisters, who were however almost immediately translated to other convents. The hardships, mal-treatment and anxiety these nuns underwent, joined to their advanced age and the inclemency of the season, occasioned the death of the greater part at the end of a very short period. Others lived several years, setting a bright example of christian and monastic virtues, and after undergoing various persecutions, died in the odour of sanctity, leaving their memories in benediction, in the very houses in which they had suffered.

The fourth carriage departed for Amiens. It contained the S. Anne de St. Cécile de Boiscervoise, aged eighty-one years, and S. Madeleine de St. Cécile Bertrand. The first of these nuns was amongst the number of those who were imprisoned forty-one years before, in the persecution of 1664. She had accompanied the abbess, Mde. Ligny, in her banishment, and having experienced the hardship of an exile she had peculiarly feared the dispersion. Owing to the badness of the weather, the roads were almost impassable; and after great inconvenience, the carriage was finally overturned, and the nuns very much hurt. The S. Anne de St. Cécile was taken exceedingly ill in consequence of her fatigue. They arrived late in the evening of the 20th at Amiens. A physician was sent for at eleven that night, as the nun appeared in the most urgent extremity; she however lived four days longer; when, notwithstanding the continual persecutions with which she was assailed on her death-bed, she expired in perfect peace, trusting in the mercy of God through the merits of Christ. On the last day of her life, she had called for her breviary; and taking out of it a little print of the great Arnould, looked at it, and then put it in the fire, carefully looking till it was entirely consumed. "I always have honoured M. Arnould," she then said to her jailors: "I entertain to my last moments for his memory the high respect and consideration he deserves; and if I now burn his portrait, it is not that my views are altered, but as a necessary precaution lest it should fall into unworthy hands!"

Next to the carriages for Amiens, succeeded two for Chartres. The S. Agathe le Juge, who went in one of them, had been lately bled, which, with the agitation she underwent, made her so ill, that she was unable to stand, but was carried into the coach and supported by pillows. There were also two lay-sisters sent to Chartres. One of them was a cripple; she had passed many years without wearing shoes or stockings, and had restricted herself in food, in order to be able to give more to the poor. She was so ill, as to be obliged to be put into the carriage, wrapped up in a blanket; she scarcely lived to reach the place of her destination.

Then followed the seventh carriage to Nèvers, containing the S. Françoise Madeleine de St. Ide Vavaseur, and S. Marie de St. Anne Courturier. Each were to be taken to Nèvers, and placed in a separate convent of Ursulines. They were conducted so carelessly, that the carriage was overturned, and thrown from the causeway into a sort of ditch or morass below. The nuns were dreadfully bruised, and dragged out of the slough into which the carriage was overturned, covered with mud. They at length arrived very late at their place of destination, where they found that such a prejudice was entertained against them, that it was a very considerable time before the abbesses would take them in.

There were still four carriages to go. The first was that for Rouen; which was to convey the S. Anne Julie de St. Cynclétique de Rémicourt, the sub-prioress of Port Royal, to the priory of Bellefond. Such were the prejudices against the nuns of Port Royal, that when she arrived, they would not open the doors; so that after a most fatiguing and anxious journey, in the midst of November, the carriage was obliged to wait in the night for some hours; till at length M. d'Aubigné, archbishop of Rouen, being applied to, sent word to the abbess that she and her community could not possibly dispense themselves from obeying the King's commands. The abbess, Mde. de St. Pierre, with the utmost ill-will and reluctance, was then compelled to let Mde. de Rémicourt enter. She did not however receive her into the convent, but immediately confined her under lock and key in a small garden-house, separated from the rest of the monastery. Here she was so closely confined, that for years she only saw the lay-sister who fed her. No nun was allowed to speak to her.

She was deprived of all public offices of worship, and wholly interdicted the use of books, pens, ink, or paper ; and, horrible to relate, of either fire or candle, and that during the severest winter France had experienced for two whole centuries ; nor was she allowed to have any air, but what came in at the chimney. Still, however, her faith failed not.*

The lay-sister who attended this innocent and truly pious sub-prioress, sincerely pitied her, but durst not bring her any fuel from the kitchen ; she however entreated the boarders in the convent and the scholars to put out the charcoal of the stoves before it was quite burnt, and give it to her. This she did, without telling the young ladies what she meant to do with it, which was to take it to Mde. de Rémicourt. The young ladies concluded that the lay-sister meant to give it to the poor ; but they soon found out the use to which this compassionate nun applied it ; as she was discovered by the abbess, and obliged to do penance in consequence. Soon after, the abbess came down one day at the hour of recreation, and after conversing familiarly with the scholars, she began by exalting the advantages and pleasures of the monastic state, and asked them whether they would not like to be nuns in her convent ? Most of the scholars answered according to the views of the abbess : but one young lady, about fifteen, who afterwards proved a very eminently christian character, answered decidedly, "No Madam, I would not upon any account enter this convent." "And pray why not, my dear sister ?" inquired the abbess. "Because, Madam," returned the young lady, "both yourself and your nuns are totally deficient in christian charity." The abbess, astonished, demanded an explanation. The young lady then pointing to the prison of the sub-prioress of Port Royal, told her that there was in that prison a nun, who had been confined for a long time ; who was never admitted to the consolations of public worship ; who received no visits of charity or compassion ; who was never seen but by the lay-sister who fed her, and never allowed to come out for a moment to take the air. "Even wild beasts," continued the young lady, "have their different apartments, that they may be aired by their keepers, who exhibit them ; but you, Madam,

* It was of this nun that the archbishop said to the abbess, "You may persecute, but you never will alter Mde. de Rémicourt; she has a square head, and persons with square heads are always obstinate and decided."

a nun, a religious professor, refuse this indulgence to a human being. Moreover, this nun has been totally deprived of fire during the whole winter, which has been very long, and of unexampled severity." "Pray how do you know that?" inquired the abbess. "Because madam," replied the young lady, "fire cannot burn without smoke; now no smoke has escaped this winter from the chimney of that prison. In short, madam, you will, I am persuaded, find it difficult to cite an instance of a barbarian and a heathen who treats his captive enemies as you, Madam, a native of the most civilized nation in the world, and a professor of the christian religion, treat a lady your country-woman by birth, your superior by rank, your sister by religious profession, and, Madam, your example by sanctity; for assuredly a very eminent degree of sanctity alone could have preserved this lady, under an excess of inhumanity, which would have driven any merely common religious professor to despair." The abbess, completely abashed and severely mortified, in vain endeavoured to excuse herself: alleging the royal mandate and the authority of the archbishop. But all the rest of the scholars now taking part with the young lady, the abbess, utterly confounded, was obliged to withdraw. Next day she gave the captive leave to walk out for an hour, at the time of the recreation, with the young ladies. The permission was continued for walking every day afterwards, with leave to have a fire, and to attend divine service, though in a place by herself. Thus, whilst M. de Noailles, a cardinal of the holy college, and the archbishop of the metropolitan church, through weakness, suffered religion to be trampled under foot; a child, by firmly espousing the side of religion and humanity, had the consolation of being able to mitigate the sufferings of a saint, and to stem alone the torrent of her persecutors. Mde. de Rémicourt was treated afterwards with less inhuman severity, though she did not obtain more liberty.

Next to the carriages for Rouen, followed one for Compiègne, conveying the S. Appoline le Begue, and another nun, who were placed in two religious houses, under the immediate direction of the jesuits, from whom they suffered grievously; till at length, wearied with tormenting them, their director voluntarily declared, that in all cases they shewed such a humble fear of displeasing God, that for his part he could not but

bitterly regret the destruction of a house, whose inhabitants were so eminently holy.

Then followed a carriage to Meaux, conveying the S. Marie de Catherine Issali, stewardess of Port Royal, and the S. Marie Catherine St. Celinie Bénoise. The first suffered dreadfully from a dislocation of both hips, so that she could neither kneel nor rise without assistance. She had suffered from this malady for years; but such was her benevolence, that she used to cause herself to be carried to a couch near a table where she busied herself from morning till night with indefatigable industry, making clothes for the poor, and mixing up medicines and ointments and bleeding those who required it with the greatest dexterity. When this sister arrived, neither her grievous infirmity, nor the hardships she had consequently suffered in her journey, could induce the convent to shew her the humanity of taking her in; it was only by a positive order from the bishop that she was at length admitted into a society, from which she had to experience the harshest treatment.

Last of all, and not much before five o'clock in the evening, went the carriage for Blois, conveying the reverend M. prioress, Louise de St. Anastasie Mesnil de Courtiaux, and the S. Françoise Agnès de St. Marthe. The destination of the first was to the Ursulines of Blois; that of the latter, to the Canonesses of the same city. During the whole of the afflicting scene which she had witnessed, the prioress had exhibited alike the deep feeling of the mother of a large community, the resignation of a christian, and the dignity of mind and force of character which peculiarly distinguished herself. Every nun, before she entered the carriage, had first devoutly knelt at the foot of the altar of the sacrament, offering herself as a sacrifice to her Saviour, and then returning to the chapter, threw herself at the feet of the prioress, to ask her blessing. However sensibly the reverend mother felt these adieus, she supported them with the same dignity and constancy to the end. She most tenderly embraced each of the nuns, and then, not to weaken them too much, she only said, "My very dear sisters, be faithful to your rule, to your conscience, and to your God, who is able to maintain you in both, through the fiery trial of affliction." The nuns, on the other hand, bid her and each other adieu, till they should meet in a happy eter-

nity; they asked pardon of each other, for all the pain they might have mutually given; and animating each other with a lively faith, an ardent charity, and a firm hope, they recommended themselves to their mother's and to each other's prayers, declaring, that being united in heart in God, and for God, they could not fail to find Port Royal every where. When the procuratrix was going, she remembered that on settling the accounts, the convent had still four hundred francs in hand; she therefore desired that this sum might be given to the poor; but the archers having seized the purse, divided it amongst themselves.

Even M. d'Argenson appeared deeply impressed and touched by the conduct of the prioress. He treated her with the greatest respect, always styling her the reverend mother. He appointed the Provost of the Marechaussée himself, with six horsemen, to accompany her carriage, and repeatedly recommended him to shew every possible respect and attention to her. Indeed the whole company appeared impressed with equal respect and esteem for one who could shew at once such unshaken firmness, and such profound submission to orders so rigorous. Like the venerable mother of the Maccabees, her courage never once failed in that terrible day, in which her children were all severed from her. As it was so late in the evening, she lodged that night at Versailles. It was not until the fourth of November that both the prisoners arrived at Blois. Being early in the day, M. d'Auvergne, the provost of the Marechaussée, wished to send them immediately to their respective convents. But they having requested the favour of spending a few hours more together, before their final separation, he kindly consented. The rest of the evening and that night they chiefly spent in prayer, and in exhorting each other to resignation and constancy.

The next day the prioress accompanied the S. de St. Marthe to her convent of the Veronians, before she went to her own. Here they spent a short time in conversation. The prioress then rose to take her final leave. The S. de St. Marthe threw herself at her prioress's feet, to implore her last benediction. The prioress gave it in the most solemn and affecting manner. She then raised and embraced her, bidding her "Be faithful to the end." In this manner they separated, never to meet again in this world. The prioress was then

conducted to the Ursulines, where she was closely guarded and imprisoned, but where her unshaken constancy and eminent piety at length extorted the highest esteem, veneration and admiration of the whole community; though without abating anything of the very rigorous treatment they made her endure without intermission, till death put her in possession of the crown of life laid up for those who are faithful to the end.

The last nun at Port Royal was the S. Marie St. Euphrasie Robert: she was paralytic, which, joined to her extreme age, (for she was almost ninety) had not only deprived her of the powers of reading, writing, and walking, but even of the use of her reason. Nay, it was even thought she had too little consciousness to be sensible of what was going on at the time of the dispersion. To their great surprize, however, whilst to all appearance stupidly gazing on the scene before her, she suddenly raised her head, and turning to M. d'Argenson, mildly but firmly said, "Sir, to-day is the hour of man; but that of the judgment of God will soon and will certainly arrive." She was sent away the next morning, but suffered so severely on her journey, that her death was expected the day of her arrival at the place of her destination; she, however, survived it a few weeks.

The servants of Port Royal were not more kindly treated than the nuns. No sooner was the prioress gone, than M. d'Argenson began to dismiss the servants, who had been detained close prisoners the whole day. In vain did they represent to him, that it was now evening; that there was scarcely half an hour's day-light, and that they did not know where to go. It availed them nothing; they were turned out that night, and obliged to go where they could and seek shelter in the villages around. The next day the servants returned for their clothes and their own furniture; but all their packets had been visited, and they were only able to take what the rapacity of the archers allowed them; this indeed was not much. The archers, seeing that the greatest number of the servants had many books of piety, without scruple treated them as thieves, telling them in the most opprobrious language, that they must have stolen them from the nuns. Several of the most aged and faithful servants, having outlived their relatives, and being past their labour, were compelled to seek

a miserable shelter at the Hotel Dieu. Here they were respected as persons whose eminent piety sufficiently declared the school in which they had been educated. After suffering the evils of poverty, they died in holiness amongst the poor, after having lived in holiness amongst saints. Such however was their distress, that the curate of the parish, being called in to administer the last sacraments to one of them, could not restrain his tears on seeing the condition to which she had been reduced.

To return to our narrative. M. d'Argenson sent a special messenger to Versailles, to inform the king and Mde. de Maintenon (who was a chief mover in this affair) that the expedition was completed.

M. d'Argenson himself remained some time at Port Royal, to arrange all business relating to it. Whilst he was there, the monastery was completely ransacked by an ecclesiastic, who was brother to the Bishop of Bellay. He pried into every corner, emptying all the drawers, chests, and closets, and turning out their contents on the floor; after which every one pillaged at pleasure. All the stores and materials likewise were put into complete disorder. Of these there were a great variety, as for example, for the linen, the robing, the mattresses, the bedding, the furniture, the drugs, the apothecary's shop, the church ornaments and vestments, the fruitery, the locksmith's, the shoe warehouse, the weaving looms; for glazing, for oil, for wax, for candles, for the library, for book-binding, for book-mending, for the clothes of the poor, and for the clothes of the poor children under seven years old. In this scene of devastation, the new comers, being unacquainted with the keys, in order to save time burst through the doors, forced open the chests, turned out all to the right and left, and in the indecency of their research, did not even desist from the unheard of outrage of prying into the apartments of secular persons, who boarded in private rooms in the convent.

Not long after, the monastery underwent a second pillage. Mde. de Château Rénaud, the usurping abbess of Port Royal de Paris, came in the beginning of December to seize upon the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, and took away the provisions, clothes, furniture, and church ornaments. The provisions were considerable, because the nuns were in the habit of laying in large supplies, in the seasons in which they

were cheap ; so great was the spirit of order and economy for which this house was distinguished, in temporal as well as in spiritual affairs. As it was the time to lay in a stock of wax, there was likewise a prodigious quantity of it, and of candles, potted butter, hogsheads of prunes, grains, eggs, olive oil, nut oil, salt, and fire wood. All the linen of the noviciate remained, as well as a large quantity of coverlets, mattresses, nuns' robes, sewing thread, packthread, millpuff for mattresses, and white stuff for stockings. There was likewise a very fine piece of Gobelin tapestry, presented to them by Mlle. des Vertus, to serve at the procession of the holy sacrament. The usurping abbess remained three weeks at Port Royal, during which time she sent to the house at Paris above an hundred cart loads of effects and provisions, that remained after the pillage, besides what was sold on the spot.

It was not long before they proceeded to the demolition of the monastery. Mde. Rénaud obtained, by the credit of Mde. de Maintenon, a decree of Jan. 12th, 1710, ordering the total demolition of the house, which, exclusive of the church, had cost above 65,625 livres to build. This intention, however, was not carried into execution until the succeeding year ; when the destruction of the monastery was so complete, that it might almost be said, as of Jerusalem of old, that not one stone was left standing upon another.

Before the destruction of the monastery, M. d'Argenson learnt that Mlle. Horthemels, daughter to a bookseller in Paris, had engraved a series of plates, representing the church, choir, refectory, cloisters, and various other views of Port Royal des Champs. He immediately sent and had all the impressions seized ; as well as the copper-plates from which they had been worked off. Her mother having laid a complaint before the magistrate, he declared that his Majesty having ordered the demolition of the monastery, no representation of it should have been taken or preserved.

Meanwhile the church of Port Royal had not been included in the decree for the destruction of the house ; but about the end of 1710, another decree was obtained, for the complete destruction of all that remained. In the year 1711, accordingly, the church was destroyed ; and the bodies interred at Port Royal were exhumed at the end of the same year and in the beginning of 1712.

In the interval which elapsed between the destruction of the monastery and the exhumation, several families, to protect the remains of their friends from outrage amidst the threatening tempest, besought and obtained permission to remove the bodies of their relatives interred at Port Royal des Champs, and to give them a private but decent burial elsewhere. Accordingly six bodies of the Arnauld family, and also those of MM. de Tillemont, Racine, le Maitre, de Saci, and a very few more, were transported elsewhere.

The multitude of bodies, however, which still remained at Port Royal des Champs, continued undisturbed till the end of 1711. At that period the Cardinal de Noailles committed the superintendence of the exhumation to an ecclesiastic of the name of Le Doux ; who acquitted himself of his commission in the most shameful and scandalous manner. The operation, far from being conducted with the respect due to the sanctity of the deceased, or even with the mere decency which any occasion of the sort might demand, was committed to a set of labourers and grave-diggers of the most profligate description ; who prepared themselves by intoxication for the disagreeable task imposed upon them. They were at the time of the exhumation in a complete state of inebriety ; the whole business was carried on with the most scandalous indecency, and amidst the most profligate jests, vociferation, and blasphemy. The bodies had been interred in various places. Some had been buried in the body of the church, others in the choir, many in the cloisters, a great multitude in the external church-yard, whilst others had been laid in the internal burying-ground, which was more particularly appropriated to the nuns. The earth was opened in all these different places. The bones were dug out and carried to the chapter-house. Some of the bodies taken out of the earth were entirely decayed ; others were half consumed, many remained entire ; these, the grave-digger seldom took the trouble to dig up whole, but hacking and hewing them in pieces, tore off the flesh and mangled limbs piecemeal, throwing them in one vast heap, where the decayed bones, the putrid and dissolving corpses, and the mangled and bloody* limbs and remains, were promiscuously piled one

* The expression *bloody* having been objected to as a mere rhetorical flourish, I desire to say that it is expressly so stated in *every* account of the exhumation of Port Royal I have seen ; and I do not feel at liberty to depart from my authorities.

upon another, in one vast charnel, in order to be afterwards transported in carts elsewhere.

But a vast multitude of bodies were found which were unconsumed ; of this number were three, which even to their very dress, remained as complete and entire as when committed to the grave. One was that of a priest in his sacerdotal vestments ; another that of Laisné, a servant to the house, who had died about two years before ; and the third was that of the M. Boulard de Ninvilliers, the last abbess of Port Royal, who died in the year 1705.

On the remnants of all these bodies, whether consumed or entire, was exercised the most revolting and infamous brutality, and the most indecent profanation of the common feelings of humanity. The grave-diggers, still drinking to qualify themselves for their work, amidst a thousand blasphemous speeches tore these venerable remains to pieces ; hewing off the limbs and heads with their spades or pickaxes, in order to compress them piecemeal into some old packing cases, dragging them along to the chapter, where they were thrown into the common heap. Two gentlemen, who were hunting in the woods of Port Royal, happened to pass by at the time these brutalities were perpetrating. Curiosity led them to turn aside, knowing that the exhumation was about to take place, to see what was going forward. They entered the church, where they saw a body exhumated, as entire as if it had been only just buried. It was dressed in a surplice ; between the hands was placed a small wooden crucifix ; a divine peace still sat upon the countenance. The grave-diggers instantly stripped it, dragged it by the feet, all the length of the church to the chapter-house : then with bars

With respect to the fact itself, I am not answerable. It does however appear to me, that several instances of a similar kind are on record. In Vol. 2 of the *Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith*, is a curious account of a vault being opened after some years, and one body *bleeding* profusely, to the horror and amazement of all present. At the discovery of the body of the decapitated Charles the First, the newspapers of the day declared, that the severed head dropped *blood* ; and I remember being at Weymouth in July 1805, four or five months after the wreck of the *Abergavenny East Indiaman*, when bodies were daily thrown on shore ; and of several it was said that they *bled*. That this was the case at the exhumation at Port Royal, I see no reason to doubt. In the instance of the body of M. de Bagnol's, which had been buried above forty years, and in which a point of blood is said to have oozed from the coffin, besides leaving a long track as it was carried along, I conceive it one of the rare cases alluded to. In other instances, as Port Royal was a parish church, many of the bodies disinterred had been quite recently buried.

and pickaxes rudely tore in pieces the body, and defaced that venerable countenance which even death had respected. The body of Mde. Boulard, the last abbess, also appeared not as if dead, but as if in a tranquil sleep ; or, as it has been described, her face wore still the placidity of christian benignity, amidst the deep solemnity of death. When that of Jean Laisné was found, the workmen recognizing him to whose kindness they, as well as the other poor, had often been indebted, brutally exclaimed, "Ah, ah, Laisné, so there thou art again!"

But we must draw a veil over the scene of horrors that ensued. We shall simply say, their bodies were at length transported to the common heap. The single idea of such a spectacle outrages both religion and nature itself. What must the eye-witnesses have experienced, at unexpectedly beholding this prodigious pile of bones, the mangled and half putrescent bodies of above three thousand corpses, which it was computed had been buried there, promiscuously heaped together ! Since the reform only, which had then subsisted above a century, there were generally a hundred nuns in the house, besides priests, recluses, servants, and a vast multitude of pious friends who desired burial there. Such were the venerable characters, whose remains were thus cast out with indignity ; whilst multitudes of hungry dogs, assembled by the horrible and pestilential gales, which blew over this scene of carnage, gathered round the grave-diggers, tearing the putrid or bleeding flesh, snarling and contending for the mangled limbs ; or, foul and besmeared with gore, gnawing the bones, or sleeping, gluttoned, amidst their prey.

Such was the mode in which the exhumation of the bodies of the saints of Port Royal was conducted. When it was finished, they transported this vast mass of shapeless remnants of hewn and mangled corpses, in carts, to the church of St. Lambert ; where one vast sepulchre, or rather pit, was dug, into which they were promiscuously thrown. To complete the indecency of this most scandalous scene, it is related, that in the jolting of the carts, which were piled up very high, many of their contents occasionally tumbled out, so that the road from Port Royal to St. Lambert, might be traced by the torn remnants of human bodies. The piety of passengers and the surrounding villagers gave to these remains a burial, on the very parts of the road where they fell. The pit into which

the rest of the bodies were thrown, was dug on the south side of the church of St. Lambert. At each corner of this grave was placed a large curb stone, separating it from the rest of the church-yard; and in the centre was placed another, on which the friends of Port Royal erected a wooden cross; which mark of respect, trivial as it was, was all they were allowed to shew.

This cross, however, was very soon obliged to be renewed. The young, whom the saints of Port Royal had instructed; the old, whom they had consoled; the poor, they had helped; and the friends, whom in the slippery paths of worldly greatness they had guided; all were frequent in their visits to the desolate remains of Port Royal, and to the churchyard of St. Lambert; and, excluded from the church by the ecclesiastic who officiated, the church-yard and the site of the monastery became a place of meditation and prayer; and few out of the number visited these sacred spots, without taking away a piece of the ruins of Port Royal, or a chip of the cross erected over the remains of her saints. Truly might it have been said, "Thy servants think upon her stones; her very dust is precious in their eyes."

In fine, to complete all, many of the tomb-stones of the nuns, which were large lozenges, either of black marble or of lias stone, have been discovered in taverns and smoking houses of the lowest description, for several leagues round Port Royal; where they have been used either for pavement, or for drinking tables.

Soon after the exhumation, the walls of the church of Port Royal were blown up with gunpowder, and the timber and carpenter's work torn down, and sold to the best bidder. Truly might it be said of these harpies, that not content with devouring Jacob, they had filled his dwelling place with desolation. Not long after this, the archbishop of Beaumont tore up almost the very last remnants of this monastery; and to blot out all remembrance of a spot whose light had gone forth to the whole world, and whose good works had left an indelible impression on the hearts of men, he used the principal part of the stone-work of the building in making an aqueduct. Thus has the fury of the enemies of Port Royal been often compared to that of the children of Edom against Jerusalem. "O God! the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, and made

Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the land." * "They said, down with Jerusalem, down with it even to the ground."

Such was the untimely fate of the monastery of Port Royal. But in vain was the voice of ecclesiastical authority raised to defend the deed it had urged the temporal power, and obtained even the regal sanction; to perpetrate. One universal voice of execration arose from every quarter; and all France looked with abhorrence upon an outrage which equally stigmatized the professors of religion who had planned it, and the royal authority which had so stretched its just prerogatives as to assist in its execution. And whilst so intolerant a bigotry, and so arbitrary an exercise of power, was looked upon with horror by the vast body of the truly religious in the Gallican church, and by the truly enlightened in all countries, the fears of the superstitious did not fail to observe that this event was succeeded by a period of immediate, sudden, and almost unexampled disasters to France. Scarcely had the monarch, who sat on the throne, demolished Port Royal, when that throne, firm as it then appeared, was shaken to its very foundation. The Grand Dauphin, the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, and the Duke of Brittany, the three successive heirs to the crown, were struck by death, sudden, awful, and inexplicable; and France was left with an aged and decrepid old man at her head, surrounded by triumphant enemies. The victories of Hochstet, Ramillies, and Malplaquet, rapidly succeeded each other; Tournay, Lisle, Mons, and Douay opened their gates to the enemy. Louis XIV., in an evil hour, had, by the intrigues of the ambitious woman he had married, consented to oppress true religion equally in his Protestant subjects, by signing the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and in his Catholic subjects, by the banishment of Fénelon, and the destruction of Port Royal; and Louis XIV, whose brilliant successes, alike in arts as in arms, had obtained him the vain title of Great, died, not even leaving to his nation the empty laurels, which might have speciously concealed the naked poverty to which he had reduced them.

It was also remarked, that, on the day of the exhumation of the bodies, a violent tempest burst upon the district; and, on

* Psalm lxxix, 1, 2.

the day fixed for the translation of the remains to St. Lambert, a most tremendous storm took place; so that the expedition was obliged to be deferred for several days. It indeed extended over all France, but more particularly in the district of Versailles and Port Royal, in which all the fruit trees were destroyed. It was also observed that the winter of 1709 was severe and rigorous beyond precedent; nor did persons fail to conclude this catalogue of disasters by observing, that scarcely had Mde. de Château-Rénaud seized the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, when she was struck, in the midst of her usurpation, with sudden death. She died without sacraments, and gave no sign of repentance; and both the temporal and spiritual state of her monastery was, at her dissolution, found in the greatest disorder.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

In the year 1851, I visited the ruins of Port Royal, in company with a young friend. After inspecting the palace of its persecutor at Versailles, in the upper gallery of which (rarely visited by strangers) there are many deeply interesting portraits of those connected with the monastery, we proceeded to Les Granges, where the owner kindly shewed us the rooms once occupied by the followers of St. Cyran. The valley of Port Royal lay before us, clothed with rich luxuriance of vegetation; but a singular dove-cote was all that attracted the eye as belonging to the ancient monastery. The yellow corn was waving over its foundations; and only here and there could we trace even the relics of those sacred abodes. A large wooden cross marked the desecrated cemetery, and a small chapel had been lately erected over the site of the choir. After taking refreshment at an ancient cottage, just outside the wall of enclosure, where, as in all the other dwellings of the poor we visited, the remembrance of the saints is still preserved with affectionate respect, we passed the night at the village of St. Lambert. In the morning we went to the hallowed spot where the remains of the saints lie buried. A rough stone column, rising from grassy steps, and surmounted with an iron cross, marks the centre of the ground. We had just time to replace the garland that hung on it with a fresh one woven with the wild flowers of the neighbourhood, when the people assembled for morning prayers before going to their daily work. When the service was over, we examined the ruins of Port Royal more minutely, aided by the plans and drawings which are preserved at the Jansenist school lately established there, and were fortunate in seeing a large collection of portraits and autographs, which remain in their possession. We then proceeded to Magny, where a similar pillar and cross to that at St. Lambert bears testimony to the saints whose remains lie there also. The interior of the church is paved with the marble tombstones from Port Royal, purposely disfigured with the pickaxe, and rotting with damp; and one of the altars formerly stood in the choir of the ancient monastery.

Neither in Paris nor at Versailles had we been able to obtain any information respecting the site of Port Royal. We were guided by an old map of the environs, in which it was fortunately marked. To save the time of any other traveler who may wish to visit the ruins, we add the following directions. Taking the road through the park of Versailles to the South, enquire for Sataury; then for La Minière, Guyencourt and Voisin le Bretonneux. The road is then direct for Port Royal: and on reaching the brow of the hill, a lane to the right will conduct to Les Granges. In returning, a lane and field path on the opposite side of the road lead to Magny, whence it is not difficult to find the way back to Voisin.

"Port Royal de Paris still remains. It is sometimes called *La Bourbe*, from the name of the street in which is its principal entrance. During the revolution it was used as a prison, and called *Port-libre*; since which time it has become the Hospital of the Maternity." (*Ste. Beuve.*)

CHAPTER XIV.

Captives :—Madame Courtiaux, the last Prioress of Port Royal.

HAVING now pursued the desolation of the monastery to the last stage and term of ruin, it is time to return to the nuns : and, following them in their various retreats, to trace the effects of the faith, of which they had been made blessed partakers, upon the short remnant of their lives.

The captive nuns had, as we before observed, been generally received in the most unworthy manner by the houses into which they had been transferred. They were at first looked upon as lost reprobates, with whom it was dangerous to hold any communication. They were therefore immured in their own cells, under lock and key ; debarred the use of pen, ink, or paper, and excluded from all society ; and in many instances great personal hardships were added. Nevertheless, by degrees, every one of them without exception, the lay-sisters as well as the choir-nuns, obtained not only the esteem, but the reverence and admiration of their persecutors. Their unfeigned piety and enlightened devotion struck them with equal veneration and respect ; the same degree of piety they had never before witnessed ; of the same illumination and information they had not even a conception. The regularity and exact conformity of the captive nuns to the customs of the houses they entered, soon obtained them the highest consideration ; whilst their unflinching meekness, humility, patience, and resignation, under a long continued persecution, forcibly struck their hearts and consciences. In most instances, their persecutors, though blinded by prejudice, were not ill-intentioned ; accustomed to walk by the letter rather than the spirit, to be guided by external forms and rules, rather than by a study of the written Word of God and a spiritual application of it to their hearts, it is no wonder that being

unacquainted with the true Light, they should grope as if they had no eyes, and stumble at noon-day as in the night; and that they should sincerely think they did God service by thus persecuting his servants.

Consequently, when the light of these suffering children of God shone before them, they did not shut their eyes against it; but, seeing their good works, they learnt from them to glorify their Father which is in heaven, and to acknowledge, that none but the children of God could thus work the works of God. Accordingly, their hearts were changed towards them; and at length, as with one accord, all the houses in which they were scattered, began, not only to confess they were of a truth children of God, but to exalt their eminent piety. From the depths of their solitary dungeons their light began to spread abroad; the voice of the people was changed; and, in their remote captivity, the persecuted nuns gained a rapidly increasing host of friends, whilst their persecutors, in the plenitude of their power and in the triumph of complete success, became odious and detestable. Nor was the tide of public opinion long dubious; the peaceful, nay, the triumphant deaths of a very considerable number amongst the nuns, set the seal to a life of good works which was terminated amidst unrelenting persecutions. In their blessed deaths the voice of God spoke to their persecutors; and few, even amongst the most virulent, dared call in question the awful sanction of their happy departure.

Amongst this number, the *Sœurs Sophie Flescelles*, *St. Lucie de Pepin*, and the Prioress, *Mde. de Courtiaux*, produced a peculiarly deep impression on the public mind. Their native force of character, and their learning, were well known to be only surpassed by their unfeigned piety; nor could it be concealed, however unwillingly acknowledged by their persecutors, that their total disapprobation of the required signature was amongst the last and strongest expressions of their dying beds.

Mde. de Pepin, after having been transferred successively to several religious houses, was last of all established in the monastery of the regular Canonesses of *Picpus*, in the *Fauxbourg St. Antoine*. After edifying them for many years by her prudence, piety, and the eminent resignation with which in addition to her imprisonment she bore the agonizing pain of a cancer for many years, in secret and without complaint,

she expired in 1720, leaving a memory held in benediction, even amongst those who did not relent from persecuting her on her death-bed. The ladies of Picpus drew up a most edifying as well as affecting and interesting account of her life and death; and they still preserve, with pious care, a closely written thick quarto work, the fruit of her captivity.

Besides the great variety of translations and illustrations of scripture, which Port Royal was the means of diffusing over catholic christendom: and besides the assiduous and daily study of scripture indispensably enjoined on all its disciples; an unusual proportion of the nuns had studied the dead languages, on purpose to read the scripture in the originals. Nearly all of them read fluently the vulgate, and many were perfectly versed in the Greek and Hebrew originals. Nor did they merely content themselves with its perusal; they were in the practice of learning considerable portions by heart. Not only the nuns, but most of the secular scholars, knew the whole psalter by heart; and such was the respect in which they held the sacred writings, that whilst they were read daily to the scholars, they listened kneeling, with their hands joined in prayer; "in order that they might early be taught to pray for that Spirit of God without which we can never understand the word of God."

But above all, the eyes of France had been fixed upon Mde. du Mesnil Courtiaux, the Rev. M. prioress of Port Royal; whom we described as conducting herself with such eminent resignation and constancy at the final dispersion of the nuns. The place of her exile was Blois. For six years she suffered unabated persecution. Debarred from any access to her friends, either personally or by letters, she was closely immured in a solitary cell, except at the hour of attending divine service; nor had she either the indulgence of a fire, or the requisites of winter clothing. By the abbess and nuns of the monastery in which she was placed, she was treated as an obstinate and excommunicated heretic, with whom it was dangerous to associate; and by priests, bishops, and confessors she was almost daily persecuted, threatened, and tormented, to obtain a signature which it was contrary to her conscience to grant. Her uniform mildness astonished the one, as much as her firmness did the other. But so unconscionable and unrelenting were her persecutors, that they followed her even

on her death-bed ; the bishop proposing perjury to her, as the only price for which she could obtain a participation in the sacraments of the church. "My Lord," replied the dying prioress, "though I value the privilege of participating in the blessed eucharist above life itself ; and though it would, in this tremendous hour, be my greatest consolation ; yet I have not the ill-understood devotion, to imagine it allowable to wound the spirit of CHRIST, in order to participate in his body." Truly indeed might this saint-like prioress be said to be a partaker in the spirit of her venerable predecessor, the M. Agnés ; who on a similar occasion, had exhorted her nuns "rather to forego one of the benedictions of God, than to lose the favour of the God of all benedictions.

The last illness of Madame de Courtiaux lasted six weeks ; during which the clergy on the one side and the nuns on the other never failed to beset her dying bed, and to persecute and torment her with every device that could suggest itself ; exhausting every argument, threat, and insidious persuasion to induce her to sign the formulary. Two days before the close of her life, the bishop, who was as usual standing before her bed, exhorted her to reflect, for she would soon be in the presence of God. "My Lord," replied the prioress, "God is continually present with his children ; it was in his light only, that I ever sought light ; it is then because it is his word, and not merely because I have weighed it during a solitude of six years, that I assure you my decision is made. It is because it was made in his presence, that it is not now to be re-made." "But," continued the prelate, after an exhortation of about two hours length, "who will present you to God ? it will not be the church, which you refuse to obey ; nor yet will it be myself, who am pastor only to the sheep within her fold. What will you do when you have to appear before God, bearing the weight of your sins alone." The dying nun paused, as if deeply affected ; then fixing on him a mild but steady eye, replied "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, my SAVIOUR hath reconciled all things unto himself in the body of his flesh, through death, to present us holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight ; if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Then the dying prioress, rising in her bed, with clasped hands, and fervently uplifted eyes, exclaimed,

"In thee, O LORD, have I trusted, nor wilt thou suffer the creature who trusts in thee to be confounded." The bishop however, still went on, calling her the scourge of the diocese, declaring she was sent there as a judgment on their sins, &c. with a variety of other opprobrious expressions.

When the Prioress, having now not a day to live, found she was really to be denied the last sacraments, and every mark of christian communion, unless she consented to lend her hand to perjury, she besought them with many tears; but finding it avail nothing, she wiped her tears away and said, "Well my Lord, I am content to bear with resignation whatever deprivation my God sees fit; I am convinced that his divine grace can fully supply even the want of sacraments." The Bishop of Blois, who, seeing her deep distress, had been in hopes of gaining his point, now perceiving that nothing was to be obtained, fell into a violent fury, or rather into a perfect frenzy; and in a voice of thunder "declared her body should be thrown out as a carcass, and never should be buried in consecrated ground." "My Lord, as it pleases you," replied the nun. The physician who happened to be by, now warmly interposed, and addressing himself with some severity to the Bishop, asked him how he could in conscience refuse the sacraments to a dying person on so very frivolous a pretext; and how he could possibly himself either live in peace, or die in hope, whilst he pursued a conduct so deficient in equity, and so opposite to christian charity and meekness. The bishop made no reply, but went away.

The Prioress knowing that she had now not many hours to live, and no priest being at hand to receive her confession, assembled the whole community, consisting of the abbess and eighty nuns, all her persecutors and her enemies; and in their presence, made aloud a public confession to God of all her sins. This she did with such unfeigned piety and humility, that the nuns, prejudiced against her as they were, not only were much edified, but could not refrain from tears; indeed, when they saw her extremity, and when her serenity proved to them that it was not obstinacy but conscience that dictated her noncompliance, they repented; and with lamentations they could no longer suppress, bewailed her situation. Meanwhile, the Prioress, having concluded her confession, turned from every worldly thought. She begged the nuns to recite to her the

psalms ; and to read to her the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel, and the accounts of our Saviour's passion ; during which she either joined in the recitation, or was occupied, as appeared by her hands and eyes, in prayer. In this state she continued till twelve o'clock at night, "when," said a nun, "the light of the candles shining on her countenance, an awful majesty of settled peace, tranquility, and joy, shewed that without sigh, groan, or agony, her spirit had departed to her Lord in a deep serenity of faith and love, that made us tremble."

Scarcely was she dead, when the bishop, who had repented, returned, intending to give her the sacraments. When on entering the room he saw she was no more, and witnessed the heavenly peace on her countenance, he seemed struck to the heart. He would not, however, wholly depart from his threat. She was buried in an old abandoned burying ground, overgrown with nettles, and full of rubbish, apart from the other nuns, and without the usual prayers or ceremonies. Her latter end, however, had left a deep impression on the minds of the community ; and thirty out of the eighty nuns of which it consisted, persisted in attending her to the grave ; to shew, as they said, some little mark of the high respect they entertained for her eminent piety.

Many years afterwards, the infirmarian of that convent wrote an account of her to one of her friends, which has been handed down to us. She says, "Mde. des Courtiaux, besides her high birth, which appeared in a dignity mingled with courtesy and sweetness in all she did, was also a lady of fine accomplishments, great learning, and a super-eminent piety, which was a continual example and edification to us. She always rose at four in the morning, and spent two hours in private prayer. At six she joined in our public service till eight, when she retired into her own room, and worked for the poor till dinner, which was at eleven o'clock. She fasted all the year round excepting sundays and pascal time ; and even then she was always abstemious. After her repast, the abbess and the prioress of our convent, who alone had permission to visit her, spent an hour with her. When they had retired, our saint-like prisoner either worked for the poor, or studied chiefly in the scriptures ; or else wrote, for which she had equal talent and unction, till three, when she prayed before

the blessed sacrament for an hour and three quarters, and then attended vespers with the community. At six her collation was taken to her in her cell, after which the same nuns as before paid her another visit. She went to bed at eight, and always rose in the night and spent a considerable time in prayer before the blessed sacrament. She was of a gentle, firm, but sweet and tranquil spirit; much loved, and above all, revered and respected. Her words were few, but weighty, solid, and dignified. She seemed most sympathizing and tenderly attached to her friends, but of great tranquility of mind and heart. She lived in a most edifying and austere manner, following her rule with the same exactness as if she had been in her own convent, even to the confession of her faults, which, not being received by the priest, she made regularly in the most edifying and devout manner, every Friday, at the foot of a crucifix."

Soon after her death, a character drawn up in the form of an epitaph was handed about in all the most distinguished circles in Paris; where it excited so much attention, and occasioned such a lively interest, that it was soon dispersed even to the most remote provinces of France, Flanders, and Holland. The following, though much abridged and by no means a literal translation, is its substance.

"EPITAPH

BY A FRIEND TO THE TRUTH.

"Adoranda est veritas etiam cruci affixa."

AWAITING THE JOYFUL COMING OF HER LORD,

HERE REPOSE IN A FOREIGN SEPULTURE,

THE MORTAL REMAINS

OF THE

REVEREND MERE CLAUDE LOUISE

OF

ST. ANASTASIE DU MESNIL DES COURTIAUX,

THE LAST

PRIORESS OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS,"

"Faithful in holiness, she discharged her arduous trust as a good and prudent steward, until it pleased her Lord to call her from works to rewards.

"Respected by the world she had quitted for her high birth and eminent talents, she was venerated in her retreat and subsequent misfortunes for her christian courage, humility

and firmness. She was already nearly twenty-five years of age, when bereaved by sudden death of her father. The stroke of mercy which took him to behold the glory, made her a partaker of the grace of our Lord. Through that divine grace, she determined thenceforth to live that life of faith which is righteousness, peace, and assurance here, and immortality hereafter. Thus did this blow, like every chastening of the God of love, prove abundant in blessing. Like a sudden gale it wafted her at once into the port of salvation. She bowed her neck and her heart to the Lord; she took upon herself the light yoke of him who is meek and lowly in heart, as one deeply penetrated with shame and sorrow at having deferred it so long; and she found rest to her soul.

“At the time when she entered the house of the Lord, the church had rest for a season; and, as a wise virgin, she profited by this season of repose, to lay up a store which might keep her lamp burning with a steady flame throughout the dark night which was at hand, that it might shine in undiminished brightness, even till the bridegroom should appear. The bright constellation of the distinguished inhabitants of Port Royal shone forth in all their lustre; their brilliant light was hailed with admiration even by the world, whose darkness it manifested. Its pastors, followers of the good Shepherd, abundantly fed them with the bread and water of life. The blessing of God was upon them. The great followed their exhortation with veneration and child-like simplicity; the learned sat at their feet to learn true wisdom; and the poor found protection in their widely extended charities. Such was Port Royal, at the time that the S. du Mesnil Courtiaux became one of its inhabitants. As a wise steward, she did not in the midst of the days of plenty, forget the years of famine and desolation, which were even close at hand. She knew that the signs of the times change from morn even until eve; and that, with God, what seems far off, is, as it were, already close at hand.

Accordingly, the cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, soon began to spread; the heavens were overhung with thick darkness. An awful silence succeeded; fear seized every heart, nor was the pause of dread expectation long. The storm soon burst, which in its progress overwhelmed Port Royal. The excellent spiritual guides of the monastery were

all either lingering in distant exiles on earth, or gone to their rewards in heaven; the venerable mothers who were companions of those who had first established the reform, had successively quitted this life, in which they lived for Christ, to enjoy one in the heavens with him, which is far better; when the jealousy of the adversary of the souls of men, renewed that terrible persecution against her saints, which terminated in the final dispersion of the nuns, and the demolition of their monastery.

"It was in these tempestuous times, that the S. de St. Anastasie was placed at the helm. On the 20th of April, 1706, in the heat of a heavy persecution; the court and the Jesuits being leagued against them; all access being denied to external friends; the M. Boulard de Ninvilliers, the last abbess of Port Royal, being on her death-bed, at the very last extremity, and about to render her spirit into the hands of God who gave it; and her prioress, Julie de St. Baudran, having also not two hours to live; no guide or counselor being near, she sent for the S. Anastasie, then a simple nun, and with her dying breath nominated her prioress. She preferred her before others of a more advanced age, on account of her rare merit; and entrusted her with the sole government of the helm in this time of tempests. The S. Anastasie, bursting into tears, threw herself at the feet of the bed of her dying abbess, and conjured her to spare her youth and inexperience; but in vain. The shades of death already covered the face of the abbess, with difficulty she lifted up her cold hands, and already glazed eyes, and placing them on the head of the S. Anastasie, with a faltering and interrupted voice pronounced these words: 'His grace is sufficient for thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and he shall give thee a crown of life.' The abbess then lay down and expired; and thus the M. Anastasie accepted the solemn charge. No royal permission being granted to elect another abbess, the new prioress sustained, for above three years, all the weight of the persecutions and of the business which devolved upon her, with as much prudence as firmness. She spared herself in nothing; she did all that wisdom, strength, and prudence, chastened by christian meekness and humility, *can* do. She preserved the spirit of the monastery inviolate, in its pristine purity, holiness, charity, and sanctity.

"As far as possible, she rendered abortive the double dealing of her enemies; and if success did not crown her endeavours, it was not because her cause was unrighteous. No one ever was superior to her in christian patience. During the course of a long life of hardship and persecutions, she not only bore all which the most black calumny could invent, both against herself and her sisters; not only did she endure the usurpation of all the revenues of her monastery, and the state of poverty attendant upon it; but she even suffered the deprivation of the sacraments, without having been heard to utter one impatient word. Such is the power of the grace of God!

"At length the bolt fell, and on the 20th of October, 1709, the nuns were dispersed into various places of confinement. The place of her exile was Blois. Immured in a strait prison, amidst the unabated rigours of a hard captivity, she sat still under the shadow of the cross, and tasted all the sweetness of the divine fruit borne by that blessed tree. Dead to men, she was never more alive to God, nor more assiduous in his service. Interdicted the sacraments, by pastors whom a mercenary cupidity alone had led into error, the good Shepherd himself, the Prince and Bishop of our souls, the *only immortal and infallible Pontiff*, more than compensated her, by nourishing her with an invisible food, that the world knows not of; supporting her by that divine strength which is made perfect even in weakness, and giving her to communicate and have fellowship with him in his sufferings. Often attacked, but never conquered, she remained steadfast, immovable, ever looking at Jesus the author, until he became the finisher of her faith; until bearing, without the camp, that reproach which the world casts on children of God, she went to meet her heavenly bridegroom, through him to become a blessed partaker of the perfect liberty of the children of God.

"She survived her monastery of Port Royal des Champs, which was demolished after the dispersion of the nuns, and died at Blois, in the convent of Ursulines, in which she had been imprisoned, on the 18th of March, 1716, aged sixty-six years and eleven months; after for forty-one years adorning her holy religious profession, and after more than six years of solitude, captivity, and exile."

"Peace be to her mortal remains;

Joyful immortality, through grace, to her redeemed spirit."

CHAPTER XV.

Reaction against the Jesuits.—Remorse of the Cardinal de Noailles.—Death of Louis XIV.

WHILST the exemplary lives of all the nuns of Port Royal, and the blessed deaths of several of their number, caused a deep sensation in the public mind, the conduct of its enemies tended still farther to fix these impressions.

It has already been observed that the Jesuits were much fallen from their pristine piety. The great men who had laid the foundation of the society in piety and humility, were now no more. An enemy had, in the lapse of centuries, sowed the good field with tares. The same society to which Europe was first indebted for the best seminaries and colleges it then afforded, was now occupied in paralyzing the moral sense of the civilized world, by disseminating the baleful poison of casuistical divinity; and the very same body, which, emulating the zeal and piety of apostles, had, through indescribable difficulties and dangers, carried the gospel into Paraguay, shewing forth one of the most lovely specimens of christian society amongst the savages of South America, was beheld in Europe, occupied in endeavouring to overthrow to the very foundations, the enlightened christianity of their Port Royal brethren. But scarcely was this triumph complete, when, like the thunder of divine indignation, a stroke burst upon them from a distant quarter, which shook their credit to the very foundation. Scarcely had they unjustly destroyed the children of God, to obtain an unrivalled influence, when the whole of that influence was blasted by a foreign hand; and the immense accumulation of wealth and power, the fruit of such arduous toil, such mental labours, and in some instances, of such duplicity and crimes, was suddenly dissipated into air, and dissolved like the baseless fabric of a vision.

An accusation, presented by the powerful, and supported by a mass of evidence, was brought forward, accusing this venerated body of having openly encouraged the most infamous practices of idolatry in China, to preserve their own credit and power. They sunk, for ever, in the estimation of the public at large, and perhaps they sunk proportionably to the very exorbitant degree of credit they before enjoyed.

Then the remembrance of Port Royal, its bright talents, and its exemplary piety, was revived. The constancy with which its followers had uniformly borne the loss of estimation, wealth, liberty, and life, rather than in one single point equivocate, was remembered. It was contrasted with the conduct of its persecutors, who were accused of betraying their God for gold. France remembered, with a bitter pang, that she had sacrificed the children of God, leveled their sanctuary, and cast out their ashes as a vile thing, under the delusion of those, who, though bearing the appearance of angels of light, turned out to be fomenters of idolatry, and worshippers with heathens of strange gods.

If this remorse was felt by France in general, it was doubly so by those who had been the immediate agents of the enmity of the Jesuits in this destruction. The Cardinal de Noailles suffered, perhaps, more bitterly than any one. Weak in his resolves, but far from being ill disposed; kind, good, susceptible of pious impressions, and endowed with a tender conscience; but easily deceived, alarmed, or over-persuaded, he had never willingly consented to the destruction of Port Royal. Now, however, that he clearly saw the wickedness of those to whom he had lent himself, he became fully convinced of the innocence of those whom his weakness and irresolution were made the means of oppressing. He began more loudly and more distinctly to hear the voice of conscience; the good report of the persons he had destroyed, reached him on all sides, agonizing his soul; a deep perturbation and disquietude seized upon him, and his heart might truly be said to be rent asunder with remorse and sorrow.

In this state he sent again for his faithful secretary Thomassin, and exposed to him the terrible state of mind in which he found himself. He told him that he most bitterly repented not having followed his advice; that Port Royal was never absent from his mind; that its recollection rose up contin-

nally before him, and followed him everywhere ; that he felt a perpetual restlessness ; and seemed on his pillow, in the visions of the night, alternately to see it flourishing, peopled with saints and men of letters, blessing and blessed ; and then suddenly to behold the scene reversed, and to view the desolate condition to which his irresolution had reduced it. He seemed to hear the bleak winds of winter whistling through its desolate passages, to see the nettles overgrowing its courts and the fox peeping out of the windows, or wolves disputing the mangled remains of its pious inhabitants, whilst the very stones of its foundations seemed torn up and hurled upon his guilty head by some invisible hand.

M. Thomassin, sensibly feeling the cardinal's extreme anguish, endeavoured to speak to him as a christian should do. Without mitigating or palliating his culpable weakness, he sought to soothe by those consolations which may be justly appropriated even by the most deeply sinful, when they become sincerely penitent. But the cardinal was not to be so appeased. He declared he could not be satisfied without going to the very spot, beholding the full extent of his sins, and in the very scene whence the record of his offence rose to heaven, humbly confessing it before God, and imploring, if not too late, for mercy ! In short, he said that as the only tribute of respect he could now pay to Port Royal, and as an unfeigned mark of deep humiliation and repentance, he must visit the ruins, and water them with his tears ; and that he desired his true and faithful friend, M. Thomassin, would accompany him.

The day was fixed. At the appointed hour the cardinal called in his carriage, and they both went together. During the whole ride, the cardinal appeared deeply affected, and maintained a profound silence. On arriving at the brow of the hill upon which the farm of Les Granges is situated, and from which the top of the spire of Port Royal was first visible, he could no longer suppress his emotion ; but covering his face with both hands, he burst into a torrent of tears, which however seemed so far from relieving him, that he appeared half suffocated and convulsed with sobs. "In short," said M. Thomassin, "his groans were not so much like the sorrowings of a man, as the suppressed groanings of some animal in torture, so that I began to be absolutely terrified at the state of

extreme misery and agitation in which he was. I tried to calm him, but in vain. Absorbed in the distressing images which remorse presented to his conscience, he heeded me not. I then urged him by every possible persuasive to return, fearing lest a nearer view of the demolitions should really be succeeded by some fatal revolution either in his bodily frame or his mind; but in vain. He broke from me, and quitting his carriage, drew near, bare-headed and with clasped hands; and though his legs trembled under him, so that I could scarcely support him, and he was often constrained to stop from the violence of his emotion, he would nevertheless proceed, exclaiming, 'No, no, I will go on, yes, to the very end. I will not be spared any part. I will see my enormous sin in all its horror. Here, in the midst of this miserable devastation, here will I unburden my mind. Here it may be, (oh, here may it indeed be,) that the God of all compassion will yet have mercy on me, a miserable sinner!' Then beating his breast, and wringing his hands, like one frantic with grief, he prostrated himself on the earth, amidst the wide spread desolation, and cried aloud for mercy." At length he came to the burying-ground. The yawning graves still appeared gaping on every side, and along the dismantled wall, though covered with waving nettles and wild flowers, the inscription yet remained over the portal before entering, "Time is yet before thee," and, having entered, "Time is for ever behind thee." Here he seemed seized with an absolute agony or frenzy of raving despair. "Oh, said he, beating his breast, all these dismantled stones will rise against me at the day of judgment. Oh, how shall I ever bear the vast, the heavy load!" When the Cardinal had quite satisfied his feelings, or rather, when he was so completely exhausted as to be quite incapable of any resistance, M. Thomassin put him again into his carriage, and brought him back; which however he did not accomplish without considerable difficulty, for his grief was so extreme that it resembled the alternative ravings of the wildest frenzy, succeeded by the gloom of the blackest despair.

From this period, the cardinal sincerely endeavoured to repair the injuries he had done Port Royal, by uniform kindness towards those nuns who still survived the stroke of their dispersion, and the protracted and cruel hardships experienced

in their various captivities ; but, with the very best intentions, he could do but little, owing to the implacable virulence and deep-rooted prejudices fomented in the king's mind by Mde. de Maintenon. Accordingly, the nuns of Port Royal remained in the state we have briefly described, till the death of Louis XIV., which took place in September, 1715.

Whilst in the depths of their dungeons, they had felt their peace deepen, and their hopes brighten more and more, as they approached a perfect and eternal day ; their unhappy persecutor, from the meridian of worldly splendour, had seen the sun of his prosperity gradually decline, till the long evening of his days, desolate, solitary, and cheerless, set in ; and as the lengthening shadows stretched across his path, the dark shades of the tomb began to close around him, uncheered by the bright evening star of christian hope. In the last hours of his life, abandoned by Mde. de Maintenon, whom he had raised from obscurity, to whom he had sacrificed even the decencies of his state, and whose tool he had been in his persecutions ; he sent for those to whom he had had the misfortune to give his spiritual confidence, the Cardinals de Rohan and de Bussy, and the Père le Tellier, a Jesuit ; and when they stood around his dying bed, he addressed to them in anguish of spirit these memorable words : " If indeed you have misled and deceived me, you are deeply guilty ; for indeed I acted in good faith, indeed I sought the peace of the church." Thus died Louis XIV. ! and so did the " Lord avenge his slaughtered saints," whether of the church of Calvin or of Rome ; and so *little* was the close of him whose dazzling qualities had amongst men obtained him the title of *Great* !

Ascending the throne in an early minority, harassed by the distractions of civil war, Louis was educated in the school of adversity, without reaping its best benefit. He derived there the lessons of human prudence, but had the misfortune not to learn those of heavenly wisdom. Hence subsequent prosperity, sent as a blessing, proved a snare. Fitted by the native force of his mind, as well as by his situation, to become a central point of re-union to the talents of his nation ; the fine arts flourished under the protection of his throne, and poets selected him as the subject of their song. His praises sounded from the fortified rocks and broad waters of the Rhine, to where they were re-echoed by the snow-capped

Pyrennees : and the prostrate nations whom his victorious arms had subdued, were compelled to bow their reluctant necks to his yoke.

But, when he knew God, he glorified not God, neither was thankful to him who gave him so much richly to enjoy ; hence, because he did not like to retain God in his knowledge, he became given over to a reprobate mind ; and, untouched by the signal prosperity of his public career, he sunk into the unhappy number of those who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

The Lord lifted up his voice and spake by his providences ; and laying a gentle hand upon him, first began to counsel him by the awful examples of the partners of his errors.*

The king was startled ; perturbations seized his mind and conscience. But his fear, and not his heart was struck. Thus while he turned from many of the works of unrighteousness, his heart was not changed ; he was not a new creature.

Yet the Lord had patience still. Once again his voice spoke in his providences ; and, raising up in his own house a great example of insufficient religion, he bade him consider the end of these things, and understand it perfectly. One arose before his eyes, far different from the rest, abounding in many of the choicest gifts of God to human nature. Solid in understanding, unblamable in conduct, wise, prudent, and accomplished ; this much and yet more was the celebrated Mde. de Maintenon. Having risen from the very depths of poverty and obscurity, by progressive steps, to seat herself next the throne, (and risen by dint of real merit) she was strictly decorous in conduct ; untainted even by suspicion, she was punctiliously exact, not only in the ceremonial of religious observances, but in many essential points of good conduct which religion enjoins ; she heard gladly, and like Herod, did many things. She was of those who fast twice a week, and give tithes of all they possess, and who, touching the righteousness of the law, are blameless ; she wanted nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit, nothing of christianity but the truth and life. But if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.

le M. Angélique, Mde. de Maintenon possessed super-

awful accounts of the ends of Mdes. de Montespan and Fontanges in St. Maires.

eminently the talents requisite for prudent government; but though the trees were thus far externally alike, yet their fruits partook of the total difference of their roots. The M. Angélique, following the good shepherd, and led by his voice, established a society, which, whilst it flourished, diffused vital religion over catholic christendom; and whose numerous writings have, since its destruction, proved a solace and edification, equally to the catholic and to the protestant churches. Mde. de Maintenon, a decorous follower of the world, attentive to the voice of well-understood ambition, uniformly paid homage, not only to the ceremonial of religion, but to many of the respectable social duties. But the sheep alone know the good shepherd's voice, and distinguish it from that of the stranger. Hence, through ignorance, she used her influence to quench the flame of vital religion wherever it sprung up, both in the catholic and protestant churches. Both the M. Angélique and Mde. de Maintenon established monasteries. Both institutions were in the very same district, and each have reflected well earned celebrity on the noble foundresses. But the requisite recommendation to the one was piety; that to the other, elevated rank. From the establishment of the M. Angélique, want of vocation was the only exclusion; from that of Mde. de Maintenon, not only want of rank, but the want of interest, nay, even any personal deformity or accidental blemish, were decisively exclusive. In Port Royal the Holy Scriptures were daily studied, kneeling or prostrate, and were applied to the conversion of the heart, to form heirs of heaven; in the monastery (if such St. Cyr may be called) founded by Mde. de Maintenon, the Scriptures were also used, but used as the subjects of theatrical representation; and the historic examples of holy writ were employed, not for edification, but as means of acquiring a graceful carriage and good enunciation, in order to amuse the king, and form her disciples for inhabitants of a profligate and dissipated court.

The M. Angélique, descended from a family, noble, affluent, and of high intellectual endowments, counted all these advantages as dross, so that she might win Christ. After beginning by being the blessed means of the established conversion of her whole excellent family, she went on from faith to faith, and from grace to grace, a bright example, of which the world

and the age were not worthy. Opposition thwarted her at every step: persecutions on all hands thickened around her, and hedged her in on every side; till at length, seeing the object of her whole life and endeavours on the point of being overthrown, immured and imprisoned in that house which was bestowed by the munificence of her family as a royal abbey; surrounded by calumniators and enemies; threatened with violence by the civil power; a martyr to a most lingering and excruciating disease, but possessing her soul in perfect peace, the M. Angélique expired full of joy, serenity, assurance, and triumphant faith.

Mde. de Maintenon on the other hand, having sprung from a family obscure and comparatively little known, acted prudently, to win an honourable worldly reputation. She began by supplanting her benefactress, whose patient perseverance and reiterated endeavours, had alone succeeded in bringing her forward. She proceeded from honour to honour, above suspicion, and untainted by the breath of malice or calumny; till surrounded by partisans, flatterers, and dependants, governing by her capricious smiles the prostrate princes of the blood, who, freezing in winter snows, accompanied, bare-headed, her equipage on foot, she obtained a degree of worldly prosperity far beyond all which the wildest imagination can offer to dazzle the hopes of any subject. She became the ruler of the throne itself, which unblushingly stooped to her sway; till having obtained, she found the bright bubble, which reflected such dazzling colours, delusive, hollow, and empty. Dull, heartless, drear, and cheerless, without object, stimulus, or hope; an old age of apathetic despondency proved the sole meed of a life of insufficient religion, of habits of social usefulness grounded on no firmer basis than an enlightened self-love, and of a heart which stopped short of truly loving God.

So spake the voice of God by providences, in which judgment was tempered with mercy. But it spoke in vain. Louis understood it not. Hence because he sought not the truth with his whole heart, he was entangled in a net of his own weaving, and given over to believe a strong delusion. Because he enquired of the Lord, without putting away the idols from his heart; therefore was he answered according to the multitude of his idols. Whilst he sedulously followed the forms of the church, he so little understood its spirit, that

under the influence of Mde. de Maintenon, he had the misfortune to become one of the most virulent persecutors of vital religion. He signed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the imprisonment of Mde. Guyon, the exile of Fénélon, and the destruction of Port Royal.

Thus was the king so unfortunate, as to shake to its very foundation all true and vital religion in France; both in the Catholic and Protestant churches. Little did he imagine, that at no very remote period the onward temple itself would sink beneath the poisoned darts of the aliens; and that in the hideous scene of ruin, his own descendants would, amongst the very first, be buried in its fall. Little did he foresee, that the very palace of Versailles, in which he signed the death-warrant of all spiritual religion, would, stripped and dismantled, be amongst the first to encounter the wide and long and desolating storm.

Such were the disastrous consequences of a reign, distinguished not more by the brilliant constellation of talents which gave it lustre, than by the immorality and profusion of the prince; and by the protracted, ruinous, and needless foreign wars, which, beginning by loading the nation with insufferable burdens, terminated in the total subversion of that royal authority, by whose insatiable luxury and ambition they had been originally imposed. One dark providence quickly succeeded to another. He had forced down the holy hands which were wont to be uplifted, and the enemies began to prevail against him. His fortresses were surrendered, his campaigns were disastrous, his fields were the prey of the spoiler.

The king's own family was struck; and reiterated blows in rapid succession, sent his daughter-in-law, and three successive heirs to the crown, to an early tomb. A sudden consternation and awe spread over the defenceless land; and the gloomy cloud was rendered yet darker, by the impenetrable mystery that lowered over their common grave. Thus stood Louis, defenceless, stricken, and alone; in vain opposing the hoary honours of his defenceless head to the driving storm. The murmur of popular applause was changed for the portentous silence of discontent; the cheering voice of domestic kindness was hushed in the silent grave; the chillness of frozen age crept upon him, and benumbed his aching heart.

and the dark and lengthening shadows of the grave stretched across his desolate path ; whilst the low, faint murmurs of a troubled people began to indicate a gathering storm.

Yet in the dread stillness, a voice arose ; the voice of that divine love which overcometh evil with good, and which is stronger than death. From their distant exiles, and from the depths of their remote dungeons, the prayers of the Arnaulds, the Sacis, the Fénétons,* the Guyons, and the Valois,† arose continually in remembrance before God, and pleaded the cause of their persecutor. The fervent and effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Louis XIV. slept with his fathers, and the last departing beam of the long day of grace lingered yet.

At last, after a profligate regent, and his licentious successor, had filled up the measure of profusion and immorality, the brooding tempest burst ; and a long and tremendous hurricane swept over the guilty land. The earthquake from beneath uprooted its foundations ; the bolt from above, struck the throne ; and the storm of destruction passed over the land. God, who visits upon the third and fourth generations, the sins of the fathers who have been disobedient ; singled out, and struck in the midst of the startled nations, that throne by which he had been set at nought. The voice of his thunder was heard ; and it spoke to startled Europe, to distant centuries, and to unborn generations of men, the dread retribution which attends the neglected duties of the altar and the throne.

* See the letter written by Fenelon on his death-bed to P. le Tellier, in Beausset's life, tom. iii. p. 458—461.

† See Lettres de Madame Gertrude de Valois.

CHAPTER XVI.

Reunion of the Captives.

Soon after the death of Louis XIV., all the prisoners detained merely on account of religion were liberated, both from the Bastille and every other state prison in France. None more deserved the same justice, than the nuns of Port Royal; dispersed, exiles, and captives, for the same cause. At this favourable juncture, their friends conceived the idea, that some relief might perhaps be extended to them: and they determined to interest themselves in their favour. A way had already been prepared for their exertions, by the active zeal and steady fidelity of Mdlle. de Joncoux, a lady equally noted for piety, learning, and active talents for business.

From her early youth, Mademoiselle de Joncoux entertained a close connexion, and a filial reverence and attachment for Port Royal. As she grew up, she became devoted equally to piety and to literature.* No sooner had the persecution begun, than she instantly relinquished her favourite studies; and henceforth wholly devoted her talents, her purse, and her activity, to the service of her oppressed friends. When their revenues were seized, her fortune was, with a bountiful hand, applied to their relief. When they were vexed with unjust, but endless litigations, her clear mind unraveled all the mazes of misapplied law. It pursued iniquity and injustice in all its windings and latent concealments. She detected the hidden fallacies of the cause of their unjust oppressors, and repelled their blows with equal steadiness of friendship and legal skill. In vain did the nobility, the court, and the jesuits, unite to crush the efforts of this valiant Judith. Though

* It is to her elegant and learned pen, that the world is indebted for the celebrated translation of Nicole's voluminous notes to the *Lettres Provinciales*, published originally in Latin, under the assumed name of Wendrock.

unassisted and alone, far from shrinking from this unpopular and most arduous office, or from trembling at the frowns of the great, she not only stood her ground, armed with the panoply of a good conscience, but followed them in their secret retirements, unfolded to their eyes their own iniquity, and exhorted them searchingly upon their conduct.

After their final dispersion, though her hopes were crushed, her kindness, piety, and courage, were still equally industrious and persevering. She tried by every means in her power to mitigate the rigours of their captivity.

When the pensions of the exiled nuns were not paid, and when they suffered, in consequence, from a continued deprivation of the first necessities of life, Mademoiselle de Joncoux, continually sent them pieces of serge, broad cloth, linens, and every comfort she could procure. At length, by dint of reiterated endeavours, and much address, she found means, in some instances, to open a correspondence with some of the exiled nuns, which enabled her to discover, and diligently to publish to the whole world, the iniquitous artifices which were used to induce them to forego their conscience. When a pretended list of their signatures* was published by the Jesuits, she engaged M. de Fouillou to publish a work against them. It was her industry which collected, and her zeal which furnished, all the documents completely to refute and detect the imposture; and it was greatly owing to the exertions of this lady, in giving notoriety to the truth, that the public mind was so totally changed, as it respected Port Royal.

Such was the state of affairs, when, at the death of Louis, and immediately on the beginning of the regency, all the friends of Port Royal united with this lady in petitioning for the redress of those grievances under which the Port Royal nuns laboured.* As their monastery was rased, and their revenues dissipated by their persecutors, their friends conceived the idea of endeavouring to unite the captives in one and the same convent, and letting them enjoy the short remainder of their days in each other's society. Various

* Soon after the dispersion of the nuns, a list of the signatures of several was published. On investigation, it appeared that in some instances of paralytic imbecility, the hands of the nuns had been guided by their persecutors; in all the other instances but one, retractions were formally made by the nuns, who positively denied ever having lent their names to the papers published. One nun alone, M^{de}. de Vavaseur, made no retraction.

objections were at first raised against this benevolent scheme ; but at length, by dint of unwearied perseverance, and of that charity which overcometh all things, they succeeded. Scarcely had success crowned this good work, when Mademoiselle de Joncoux, having reaped the temporal fruit, was called to the eternal reward of her labours.

It was then determined, that the remaining captive nuns should be united together in the same convent ; but many years had now elapsed since the destruction of Port Royal ; most of its persecuted inhabitants had for ever left their troubles far behind. Five of them only were united in the abbey of the Benedictines of Malnoue, one of the most respected communities in France, for its regularity, and for the spirit of poverty, retirement, union, and charity, which reigned there. These nuns were Mdes. le Juge, Couturier, Bertrande, Basilise, and d'Afflon.

The sisters of Malnoue received the nuns of Port Royal in a spirit according with the exhortation of St. Paul ; and those whom they entertained as strangers, proved to them as angels indeed received unawares. The nuns were welcomed, and treated in a manner which was well calculated to make them forget the bitterness of their long captivity, and to mitigate those deep sorrows which could not be removed,—the loss of their friends, and the destruction of their house. They formed, in the midst of the abbey Malnoue, a little Port Royal, of which Mde. de Couturier was the head ; and light, and fervour, and an abundance of spiritual blessings were soon diffused by their christian example, over the house which had at first received them so kindly.

Many years after, a nun of the convent of Malnoue thus wrote of them ; "I have only had the honour and happiness of being acquainted with these eminently holy and blessed persons, since they came amongst us. Although their residence with us has been extended to many years, yet we can give you no account of any of the sufferings and vexations they endured elsewhere, because their humility and christian charity never allow them to mention or even to allude to them. We endeavour that they should have nothing to suffer with us, but the recollection of the past. Their abode with us has been a blessing to the whole house, and they are a continual means of instruction and edification to every one of us. They

lead a uniform, retired life. They are continually occupied in prayer, or in studying scripture, excepting when they are engaged in working for the community, or the poor, or in performing acts of charity. Exact in conforming to all our regulations, they are always punctual, both to time and to the most minute of our observances. They are, above all, distinguished by a great air of candor, simplicity, deep humility, and a dignity of truth, which both impresses us with respect in their manners, and which is written on all their countenances. Their self-abasement is equally deep and sincere ; it is not indeed continually in their speech, as is the custom with many religious professors ; but all their manners and actions bear witness, that they of a truth, believe themselves most weak and fallible. They may be called truly great as religious characters, never seeking applause or distinction by undertaking any extraordinary or remarkable acts of penance or mortification, but doing apparently common things with a most remarkable and uncommon fidelity and spirituality. All human life is really made up of a succession of little occupations and duties, which, without tedious minuteness, could not be related ; but, in reality, it is a constant fidelity, in the aggregate of these little things, that forms the true greatness, and grandeur, and solidity, of the christian character. Their venerable superior, Mde. de Couturier, was paralytic on one side, and could not therefore walk without extreme difficulty. She always, however, contrived to drag herself to all the observances of the community. She often spoke of the great and venerable M. Angélique, and was indeed her worthy follower in all things. It is difficult to describe a piety so eminent that it influences the beholder progressively by its sublime constancy, rather than dazzles by any sudden impression ; I can then only, in one word, say of them every one, that we do not any of us recollect a moment, since they have been with us, in which they did not seem present with God by thoughtfulness, and with their sisters, by a genuine spirit of christian love. This is all I can tell you of them. All was interior, supremely loving and reverencing God from choice, always speaking of him fervently, and in him loving each other and us with an equable divine love."

Each one of them made a blessed and edifying end.

CHAPTER XVII.

Madame de Valois, the last nun of Port Royal.

By far the most eminent amongst all those nuns of Port Royal who lived to be recalled, was the S. Madeleine de St. Gertrude de Valois.

This lady, whose name announces the dignity of her birth, was distinguished for supereminent abilities, high accomplishments, and for manners equally polished and dignified. Early introduced into the first circles of Paris, she had scarcely tasted the pleasures of the world, when she experienced their vanity; and just as her parents were on the point of concluding a match for her, the splendour of which might be suitable to her birth, she suddenly formed a resolution, finally to quit the world, and to devote herself entirely to the service of God. She accordingly presented herself as a postulant at Port Royal, and entreated with ardour, permission to consecrate herself to God in that house.

The M. Angélique de St. Jean was at that time mistress of the novices. This excellent spiritual mother, well aware by experience of the heavy persecutions the house had sustained, and would probably have again to experience; and knowing Mdle. de Valois's resolution to have been sudden; thought it right to lay before her a full view of the two-fold difficulty she would have to contend with, that of assuming the rigours and discipline of a strict monastic order, after habits of luxury and dissipation; and that of continuing steadfast and immovable in the heat of persecution, amidst subtleties and artifices, which were enough to deceive the very elect, and to subvert the old-established in the faith.

But all she was told of these difficulties, only augmented her zeal and strengthened her resolution to enter the monastery. She commenced her noviciate with ardour and firmness, ground-

ed on a depth of humility, and a degree of holy confidence in God, which gave earnest of the solidity of her vocation. Silence, watching, fasting, obedience, and humiliations, became her delight. Soon after her entrance into the monastery, she was seized with a violent and dangerous fit of illness, so that her life was despaired of. This attack was attributed to her having unadvisedly, and contrary to the usual practices, assumed at once all the austerities of the religious life. The violence of this transition was farther aggravated by her having entered at Lent. She sank to the very brink of the grave. In these heart-searching circumstances, her peace and tranquillity manifested the sincerity of her conversion : she prepared for death in the full assurance of faith.

The danger, however, was transient ; though, after it was removed, both her friends and the community united in the conviction that she never would be able to endure the austerity of the rule. The abbess of Port Royal informed her friends, that however eminent were the qualities of Mdle. du Valois, and however deep was her conviction of her merits, it became impossible, under the circumstances which had just occurred, to receive her. No sooner was the young postulant apprised of the abbess's determination, than the deepest grief manifested itself in her countenance. She listened, however, in respectful silence ; and then going into the choir, prostrated herself at the foot of the altar, and, bathed in tears, earnestly prayed to God to take her future destiny under the direction of his peculiar providence, and so to overrule the voices of those who should consult, that their decision might be for that state of life in which she could be most faithful to divine grace. She then concluded by a solemn appeal to the Father of Spirits, and Searcher of Hearts, beseeching, that if, in his fore-knowledge, he saw that she would prove unfaithful amidst the temptations of the world, that he would be pleased, in mercy, rather to remove her by death, than permit her to return to it.

Mdle. du Valois's friends having taken proper advice and her health in the meantime having become completely re-established, it was decided that she might safely enter the monastery, and that by a more cautious beginning, she would without doubt be soon enabled to bear all the austerity of the rule. Accordingly,

the year 1677, she began her noviciate with equal devotion

and fervour. She passed through all its trials with a fidelity and zeal truly edifying, and was on the point of consummating her sacrifice, by taking the black veil and final vow, when the M. Angélique de St. Jean, who was then abbess, foreseeing that another storm was about to burst on Port Royal, determined to lay before her a full view of all the difficulties to which she would expose herself.

She represented to her, with force, all the dangers, perils, and persecutions, to which Port Royal was then exposed; recounted to her the past exiles of many of the nuns; and observed, that she would probably find herself grievously deceived if she looked for her strength in the example and fellowship of a large and holy religious community, instead of fixing her single eye on Christ alone. In the persecutions which were past, they had been separated from each other; many had past three or four years in a solitary captivity. The remainder of the community had seen the exterior of their monastery invested with soldiers, and the interior occupied by strange nuns, placed there as gaolers, who watched them in such a manner as to preclude all christian fellowship as effectually as if they had been really separated. She told her that a very uncommon degree of faith could alone justify a person in voluntarily exposing herself to difficulties, dangers, and temptations, so far beyond the common austerities of any monastic order. She therefore insisted upon her taking some days purposely to consider of what had been pointed out: and concluded by exhorting her, in the most solemn manner, to sound her heart thoroughly before God; and by no means hastily, and without a full conviction that it was really required of her, to entangle herself in a maze of snares, out of which the wisdom which is from above could alone extricate her; or to expose herself to a weight of persecutions, which those who had experience could fully assure her, that only a very uncommon degree of the grace of God, and of fidelity in corresponding to it, could possibly enable her to sustain. "In short again," said the abbess, "I most solemnly exhort you to count the full cost before you venture to lay the first stone; and in the holy presence of God, who searches the secret motives of every heart, I now in his name declare to you that you are inexcusable, if you voluntarily assume a calling in which all your difficulties and temptations will be increased

an hundred fold ; unless you believe that God really requires it of you, and that his Spirit has pointed out this and this only, as the path in which you individually are called to enter and work out your salvation." The abbess having thus exhorted her young novice, Mdle. du Valois answered, without hesitation, that she was fully aware of all the abbess had represented ; that she had weighed it well, and was convinced it was her duty to enter that holy community. She added, that she could consider it equally a happiness and a glory to partake in such sufferings for Christ's sake ; that she was assured that his grace was sufficient for her ; that divine strength would be perfected in her weakness, and that she should think herself most happy, were she counted worthy to shed the last drop of her blood for Christ's sake.

In these dispositions she took the veil, in the twenty-second year of her age ; and the Lord did not fail to shed abundant blessings upon the soul, on whom he had bestowed such a preparation of heart. The proofs of the solidity of her vocation were manifest from the very beginning of her engagement. All the christian graces seemed united to the bright gifts by which she was distinguished. She set no bounds to her penance but those formed by obedience. And, if the rigour of her austerities appeared excessive to her companions, whose short-sighted views only comprehended the present time ; the extreme persecutions and bodily sufferings, by which her faith was afterwards tried, leave no doubt upon the christian mind, that she was led in this uncommon path by that Spirit of God which foresaw the nature of her future trials and thus prepared her for her sufferings, as by a holy apprenticeship. During severe winters, she not only deprived herself of the comfort of ever approaching the fire, but she was often observed, during the night, exposing herself to the rigours and inclemencies of the open air. She habituated herself continually to sleep on the floor of her cell, and often curtailed her rest to five hours. Though naturally of a feeble and delicate constitution, she embraced with joy occupations not only the most humiliating, but the most arduous and laborious. That humility, that love of being abased and counted as nothing, without which all penance and austerities are only vices is a precious disguise, was deeply rooted and grounded in her art. It seemed, if possible, the supereminent characteristic,

beaming amongst the constellations of talents and virtues which adorned her mind and soul. The habitual and deep sentiment of her manifold unfaithfulness, seemed always present with her; but not content with annihilating herself merely before God, she always embraced every sort and occasion of public humiliation, which she imagined might tend to degrade her in the eyes of her sisters. With this view, several years after her profession, she earnestly besought her abbess, to permit her to make a public confession in the presence of the whole assembled community. Such examples, indeed, were by no means rare at that monastery.

But if the virtues of Madame de Valois shine thus brightly amongst the great lights of Port Poyal, they beamed forth with redoubled effulgence, when, amongst the children of darkness with whom her lot was afterwards cast, her light shone forth alone. At the final dispersion, she was sent to the convent of the Filles Dieu, at Chartres, where she arrived on Nov. 20th, 1709. This monastery was so violently prejudiced against Port Royal, that it would not open its doors to receive her; and Mde. de Valois was compelled to remain in her carriage in the street till four o'clock in the morning, before the bishop's mandate could be procured, which they were then, though very unwillingly, compelled to obey. She was immediately conducted to a cold damp cell, where she was immured under lock and key. The whole house considered her as an obstinate heretic of the very worst description. Not one member of the community would associate with her, or even speak to her, without the most urgent necessity. Her health, it has been observed, was always delicate; and at this juncture, the hardships she endured had rendered it peculiarly infirm. In this state, sick and in sorrow, she was placed in a house of enemies, without consolation or friend, and even without receiving the good offices of common humanity. Torn from her mothers and sisters, and from the beloved house which she considered as the port of salvation, she was now a captive in a strange place, where she was rigidly guarded, wholly deprived of books and of work, condemned to a horrible and unvaried solitude, except, indeed, when it was interrupted by the visits of priests, prelates, and Jesuits, who exhausted all which menaces, flatteries, or subtleties could furnish, to induce her to betray her conscience and to sign

the formulary. Their visits were usually succeeded by one from the abbess, who sincerely thought she was doing God service by using every means in her power to assist their influence. Not even the languors of disease protected Mde. de Valois from their reiterated persecutions; and many times, when she was so ill as to be believed nearly dying, they were not only always at hand to weary and assail her by constant unkindness and vexatious sophistries, but they did not scruple to endeavour to stagger her faith by giving her false accounts of her sisters, and making her imagine they had quitted the truth. At these times she wept bitterly, and at first believing their fraud, replied, "Whatever others are so unfortunate as to do, the word of God cannot be broken; on that word I cast myself. He declared, thou shalt not bear false witness: and his word remains the same, though every one of the children of men should alter. Let God be true, though every man is a liar."

In this house, Madame de Valois had to encounter hardships of every description which can afflict human nature; and it would be, perhaps, difficult to determine, whether her mental, or her corporal sufferings, were most severe. She was, indeed, in want of every thing temporal and spiritual. Some of these sufferings may be conceived, by one instance, which the nuns themselves afterwards told. It has been already observed, that the winter of 1709 was the most intense which had taken place for above two centuries. During its whole course, Madame de Valois was allowed no fire. This privation was rendered more cruel, by the packet containing her change of raiment and her winter clothing, having been put by mistake into another carriage, which took it elsewhere, and it was not returned for above eight months. A charitable lady, who boarded at the convent, had the kindness to send Madame de Valois some wool to make under-garments; but she was obliged to go without any, till she had, with her own hand, spun, woven, and made them. With respect to spiritual concerns, her state was still worse; she was neither allowed to join the other nuns at divine service, nor was she furnished by them with books of devotion, before the arrival of her packet. No priest would receive her confession, nor administer to her the sacraments, though they continually | her to sign the formulary, that she might participate in

them. Her sentiments on this head, may be gathered from the large collection of her papers which yet remain; and in writing which, as it will afterwards appear, she found means to beguile many hours of her solitary captivity. In one of them she speaks in the following strain:—

“The privation of thy holy Eucharist, O Lord, sensibly affects me: yet will I endeavour continually to look to thee, the God of all consolation, for comfort under so severe a trial and deprivation. Thou, Lord, who searchest the heart, thou seest the utter impossibility in which I am placed, of partaking in this divine banquet, a participation which alone would be a full consolation, and which would make every other suffering light; yet even this trial of seeming separation from thee, I look upon as coming from thy hands, and as a part of the order of thy providence; I cannot distrust thy grace, as being all sufficient to sustain me under it. Yet, O Lord, look down upon me; look down upon me in mercy, and comfort me under the weight of my redoubled affliction. If I cannot have fellowship with my sisters, in partaking in thy most sacred body, and most precious blood, enable me, O Lord, to have fellowship and communion with thee, in thy sufferings: thy sufferings which are the whole of our merits, and which form our sole plea of mercy before the throne of God. I not only then hope, but I trust, with full assurance, to obtain the pardon of my sins, by offering by faith Jesus Christ, the only true victim for the expiation of *all* sin; and by such a communion, I not only hope to obtain pardon, but I trust my inward man will be renewed day by day, that I may find grace to help in time of need; and that as my day, so shall my strength be. In short, I trust to participate in all the graces of those who do externally communicate; not but that I ever esteem those most happy indeed, who do enjoy this privilege; yet I thus occupy myself, to moderate my excessive grief; and in the desolation of my misery, I seek to communicate in the vivifying Spirit of my Lord, that Spirit who is emphatically termed the Comforter, who was the consoler of the disciples, when the bodily presence of Christ was taken from them; that Comforter our Saviour promised to send to the disciples when he departed, and promised should abide with them for ever, which he declared to be no delusion, but the Spirit of truth, proceeding from the Father,

and testifying of him. If I receive thee not outwardly, whilst on earth, in the Eucharist, I shall in bliss behold thy glory in heaven. Ransomed by thy blood, I shall then behold, face to face, him whom now I see only as through a glass darkly, but whom though not fully seeing, I love ; nay, I shall not only see, but joining the redeemed throng, I shall, to all eternity, praise him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ; who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. My tears indeed, for a season, are my meat, day and night, whilst they continually say to me, 'where is thy God ?' Deep indeed calls unto deep ; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, and I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. Yet the Lord *will* command his loving kindness in the day time ; I shall yet praise him for the light of his countenance, and in the mean time, this recollection, this assurance, sustains me."

Such were the sentiments of this admirable nun ; but the firmness with which she conducted herself towards men, was not more remarkable than her humility before God. The latter, indeed, may be considered as the ground of the former.

On being continually tormented by the Jesuits to sign the formulary, as the price of her receiving the sacraments, "Reverend fathers," she replied, "falsehood and perjury can never be the preparation to receive the God of truth."

Some of them exhorting her to alter her sentiments, and telling her that her conscience should be reformed, she answered, "All conscience is founded upon the Word of God, who is without variation or shadow of turning, and whose word is immutable, and cannot be broken. When the conscience is once formed, it therefore cannot be re-formed."

Another time, on their exhorting her to consult the opinion of many learned men of their body, she said "Conscience must be solidly grounded, formed upon the rock of the Word of God, and not be continually re-formed on the shifting sands of the versatile notions of men : a religious conscience cannot be established on versatile opinions ; for we are no more to be children, tossed to and fro, and carried by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men." "Again, reverend fathers, the will of God is the foundation of all conscience. Now God is truth, and truth must be immutable. So likewise will the

faith and conscience of men be, if they be really founded upon it. God alone is the rock of ages. His word alone is the foundation on which to build our religious edifice; and as every foundation must in its own nature be ruinous, which is erected on the perishable basis of human opinion, so that must ever continue unshaken, which is founded on the word of God."

Notwithstanding these explicit, and repeated declarations of Madame du Valois, the persecution was still continued against her. The bishop of Chartres, the clergy, the Jesuits, as well as the nuns, assaulted her on every side. Under these circumstances, she felt heavily oppressed. She generally listened in silence, and when their burden-some visits were terminated, went, and at the foot of the altar, poured out her heart in supplication before God; often beseeching him earnestly, and with many tears, rather to let her die, than have the misfortune of abandoning the truth. Thus she went on, running with admirable patience the race set before her, renewing her faith continually by looking at him, who is alone the author and finisher of it. She waited continually on God, and therefore her strength was renewed; therefore did her soul now mount up as with eagle's wings, above the sorrows of time, and gaze as with eagle eye upon the sun of righteousness; and amidst want, hardships, and illness, and injuries, menaces, the most opprobrious language, and the most harsh treatment, did the God whom she served, strengthen her to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.

Sometimes she was threatened with being immured in a dungeon. "As it pleases your Lordship," replied she to the Bishop of Chartres, "I trust the God of truth, will protect and deliver me amidst all. If you immure me in a dungeon, truth will descend there with me; and he who is the God of truth, will both console me, and make me truly free amidst captivity; and if you put me to death, then the same truth will indeed deliver me for ever, and crown me."

Respect for the sanctuary prevents the relation of the injurious and opprobrious language the prelate heaped upon her in reply; he seemed to forget the character, not only of his sacred profession, but even of a gentleman and a man, in the foul and contumelious virulence with which in his frenzy, he loaded his unfortunate female captive. Suffice it then to

say, that he threatened her with the most horrible torments, if she did not consent to violate her conscience.

One day the prelate took away all her prints and books of devotion. "My lord," replied the captive nun, "your Lordship cannot take away from me the spirit of prayer, and that suffices me." During all the early part of her captivity, she was continually harassed by the visits of this prelate, which he mostly extended to above the length of two hours. After a time, Madame du Valois, finding that these reiterated visits were spent in repeating the same things over and over again, at length adopted the expedient of sitting down to her spinning the while, and making no reply.

The bishop sometimes threatened that he would send her to some remote place, and exile her from his diocese; to which she answered with a good humoured smile, "that his Lordship could not do her a greater pleasure."

He told her, that he should deprive her soul of the benefits of the sacraments at the hour of death, and that her body should be thrown out on the dunghill. At this threat she smiled, and said, "Well, I do not think your Lordship will be able to discover any place to cast my body, where our Saviour will not be able to find it, and raise it up at the last day; and, if in the mean time, my soul be happy in heaven, it is of very little importance where my body is cast." "But, my Lord," continued she, more gravely, "if at the awful hour of death, I should be unjustly deprived of those assistances, which the church grants to all her children, by means of priests, who should be the servants of God; then God himself will by his grace, immediately and abundantly supply their instrumentality. His divine power is no more to be circumscribed by the will, than his love by the want of charity of man. I know indeed that it is most painful to approach the awful hour of death, without a outward participation in the sacraments; but it is better dying, to enter into heaven (though without sacraments) for the cause of the truth, than, receiving the sacraments, to be cited to irrevocable judgment for committing perjury."

When the bishop announced to her that some of her sisters had signed, she wept bitterly in silence, but remained unmoved; and one day being much pressed and tormented to make *some* reply, she rose, and with clasped hands and uplifted

eyes, kneeling down, exclaimed, "O Lord, maintain me, I beseech thee, by thy all-sufficient grace; and rather permit me to die than be unfaithful to thy truth."

Such was the uniform conduct of Madame de Valois. Many years afterwards, when she was interrogated how she had proved faithful in a series of difficulties, almost beyond the endurance of human nature, she replied, "Thanks be to the grace of God alone! yet amongst means, two appear to have been attended with a peculiar blessing. One is, to ground our apprehension of duty in every instance on the word of God; where this is done, our sense of duty will not vary with our frames and feelings, but will uniformly bear the sanction of divine authority. The second is, when an action or a duty is so grounded, never to reason with the enemy; but to consider, that if God has declared his will, that declaration supersedes all motives, however plausible, by which every one of his creatures might urge the contrary. Our first parents fell by reasoning with the enemy, and the man of God of Bethel lost his life, because he listened to the voice, even of a prophet, in contradiction to that of God, which had already spoken to him individually."

The bishop of Chartres finding his endeavours unattended with the least success, gradually desisted from his visits. He however sent his ecclesiastics in his place, who often came, and endeavoured to argue the point with Madame de Valois for two or three hours at a time.

In process of time, these persecutions produced an effect exactly the reverse of what was intended. The nuns belonging to the convent where Madame de Valois was placed, though unenlightened and prejudiced, were by no means ill-intentioned. The gentleness and uniform kindness of Madame de Valois' manner, had won upon their hearts: her stability and firmness had begun to make a very deep impression upon them, and the respect and attention they paid her became daily more and more marked.

The abbess was the first who endeavoured to console her; and to diversify her captivity, by daily permitting both the principal nuns, and the boarders in the convent, to go and sit with her. When her eminent piety, her highly cultivated mind, and her amiable manners gained her the affection of the whole house, they all thought they never could do enough

to shew their repentance, for having at first treated her in a manner so harsh and unfeeling. Two ladies especially, who boarded in the convent, became most tenderly attached to her, and, by means of their kindness, she was enabled to correspond with all her friends in Paris. So strong was their attachment, and so truly disinterested their friendship, that during the time she was persecuted by the bishop's myrmidons, they had remained a whole year in the convent, without once visiting the country in summer, or Paris in winter, on purpose that they might always be on the spot to assist and console her, and to enable her to communicate with her friends.

At length, the prelate seeing that Madame de Valois had been tormented year after year in vain, and that all his persecutions were so far from gaining her, that he seemed more likely to lose the whole house, he now determined to reduce her to a close captivity; and, accordingly, forbade that she should have any intercourse with any person in the house, except the servant necessarily appointed to wait upon her, and ordered that she should never quit her cell, except at the time of divine service.

This rigid command the abbess received, and was compelled to execute. She did it with the greatest grief, as she was become most tenderly attached to her prisoner.

Madame du Valois heard the order in silence, and, when the key was again turned in the door of her little cell, she prostrated herself before God, and anew dedicated herself to him. In the afternoon the door opened, and, to her great surprise, the abbess again appeared. She expressed her astonishment, adding, that she thought only the servant was to have access to her. "For that reason, my dear sister," said the abbess, handing her the coffee, "I have henceforth the pleasure to be that servant;" and, accordingly, from that time, every morning and evening, she came and brought her both her meals, with unwearied assiduity; and then, sitting down and taking her own with her, endeavoured by every kind attention and soothing discourse, to mitigate her desolate captivity.

The abbess, however, could not prolong her visits for any great length of time, consistently with the duties of her office; and one day, being much engaged, so that her stay was shorter than usual, the kind-hearted abbess, on quitting Madame du Valois, brought a cage with two beautiful canary birds she

had tamed on purpose to amuse Madame du Valois's captivity, and set it down on her table, with tears in her eyes. Madame du Valois, who never willingly uttered any of the hardships she had endured, often afterwards mentioned these two acts of kindness as having touched her heart beyond any thing she had ever experienced; and she who had been unmoved by years of persecutions, could never mention these two little incidents without tears. But Madame du Valois had yet other trials to encounter; her difficulties appeared great in proportion to the strength of her faith, and she now began to find that it required a yet more abundant degree of grace to withstand the distress and tears, and reiterated solicitations of her friends, than to continue unshaken amidst the hardships and persecutions inflicted by her enemies.

The kind abbess, the two ladies, her friends, and indeed the whole convent, whilst they revered her piety, did not enter into the motives of her scruples. They were perhaps amongst the number of those sincerely good, but mistaken persons, who measure duty rather from the consequences an action involves, than from the principle from which it flows. They earnestly and importunately besought her to give up that which, though true, was not a truth involving important consequences, and to sign the formulary. The abbess especially used prayers, tears, and supplication. "O my dear sister," would she say, "if you will not pity yourself, pity me. Will you that I should have the misery of occasioning the death of my friend? If you should even by accident die in this captivity, I never could survive my grief." One of the ladies indeed suffered so exceedingly, on account of her anxiety for Mde. du Valois, that she was reduced to the brink of the grave by a nervous fever. In this state, when her life was despaired of, she was seized with the most earnest desire once more to see Mde. du Valois who had been the blessed instrument of their conversion. This permission was refused, unless Mde. du Valois consented to sign. She was then entreated by the abbess in the most pathetic manner, not to refuse a peaceful death-bed to her best friend for the sake of a fact of no importance. Mde. du Valois herself was most tenderly attached to this lady; her soul was agonized by the urgent representations of the abbess; and such horrible doubt and amazement came upon her, that, in the anguish of her distress, she knew not what to do. After

a pause, she urgently begged the abbess to quit the room, and prostrated herself before God in prayer, in the agony of her soul. This, indeed, she often afterwards said, was the hour of darkness. In this state she remained a long time, nor could the anguish of her mind find any utterance, but in the words used by our Lord. She earnestly prayed that this bitter cup, if possible, might pass from her, but that the will of God might be done, and that he might permit her to die in the conflict, before she renounced his truth. After several hours, Mde. du Valois opened her door, and admitted the abbess. With a countenance of perfect composure, but which evidently shewed the extremity of suffering and conflict she had undergone; and in a voice tranquil and calm, but almost extinct from the agony she had passed through; she declared her determination to adhere to her conscience. "Men," she said, "could not interrupt the true communion of saints, which was in spirit, not in bodily presence only; she was therefore going to prostrate herself before God, in prayer, for her dear friend, nor did she wish to have her retirement broken in upon at present." Accordingly, her prayer was never interrupted but once, to take a small portion of food, till next day she learnt that the crisis was past, and the lady out of danger.

Thus did this admirable nun remain unshaken, either by the menaces of her enemies, or the solicitations of her friends.

The Bishop of Chartres, seeing he could prevail nothing, resolved to rid himself of so troublesome a charge, by devolving it upon some one else. After some deliberation, he determined to transfer Mde. du Valois to a convent at Mantes, the superior of which was violently prejudiced against Port Royal, and had been successfully employed in persuading several nuns to sign the formulary. She was accordingly sent from Chartres, under an escort, a woman accompanying her in the same carriage, partly to watch her movements, and partly to wait on her.

On her journey from Chartres to Mantes, Mde. du Valois was grievously distressed in mind. A depression and horrible fear fell over her spirits, when she recollected how many, even amongst christians of the first ages of the church, had fallen during the severity of persecution. When she remembered the character which had been given to her of the abbess of

the monastery whither she was going, she feared that she never should prove faithful to the end, and she looked forward with anxiety to every accident which might happen on the road, and which might be a means of terminating her sufferings and life together, before she should have forfeited her conscience.

Early in the afternoon, Mde. du Valois reached the town where she was to lodge that night. She had scarcely arrived when a splendid carriage drove up to the door of the same inn, accompanied by servants similarly mounted and accoutred. A young lady, full dressed, stepped out, and asked to be immediately conducted to the Port Royal nun, who had just arrived. The young lady appeared to be under twenty. Her dress, which was magnificent, sparkled with diamonds and precious stones; her countenance was radiant with beauty; and her manners, though gentle, were severe, so that the persons present, feeling in awe of her, immediately admitted her. She instantly went up stairs, entered Mde. du Valois's room, and without either announcing herself, or prefacing her visit with any apology, or appearing to notice Mde. du Valois's companion, who had thrown herself upon a bed to rest, she took the nun by the hand, and led her aside to the window, where she at once began to speak to her of the high dignity and honour, and supereminent distinction, conferred upon those who are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, and who prove steadfast to the end. She then continued exhorting, strengthening, and consoling her, in a manner so full of majesty, grace, and goodness, blended with such awful severity, that the nun was in equal astonishment, both at the manner and matter of her discourse. She informed her of the blessed ends of many of her sisters, and of the great change which was taking place in the public mind about Port Royal, and many other circumstances, of which Mde. du Valois had been kept in profound ignorance. At length, after giving her a most solemn charge, and exhorting her to be faithful to the end, she, without awaiting any reply, or taking any leave, stepped into her carriage, which, setting off at full speed, was quickly out of sight, leaving Mde. du Valois in the utmost astonishment.

There was an extraordinary dignity in the manner of her unknown visitor, which, joined to the surprise occasioned by

so unexpected an incident, prevented the nun from interrupting her discourse, by asking her who, or what she was, or whence she came: but, when she had recovered from her first amazement, she sent to question the people of the inn. They were as much surprised as herself, nor could she gain the least trace of intelligence concerning this extraordinary visitant. Nevertheless, whoever she might be, the zeal and strength of her manner at once filled the heart of the sufferer with peace, consolation, and strength; so that the very recollection of this incident fortified and supported her during the three remaining years of her captivity, which she had yet to pass at Mantes.

On her arrival there, she was treated with the greatest severity. But in a very few months, she gained, as at Chartres, the esteem and affection of the whole convent; and there is every reason to believe, that the rapidity with which this change took place was very much accelerated, by the repeated letters sent to the superior nun by her kind friend the abbess, as well as from the two ladies. One of the nuns has left us an account, of which the substance is as follows:—

“At the time Mde. du Valois was sent to us by the bishop of Chartres, we received letters (from her friend the abbess) describing her as a person of the utmost sweetness and evenness of temper, who, from her natural disposition as well as from the influence of religion, was most engaging and agreeable to live with. The long exercise of every christian virtue, had induced a perfection of holiness, such as we have never witnessed elsewhere. She placed her enemies in the same rank with her friends, praying every day in private, for the one as well as the other. Patient under sufferings and the most contumelious ill treatment, her only complaint was, that she experienced more indulgence than she deserved. She always dispensed with the assistance of others as much as possible, performing every service for herself of which she was capable, continually sweeping her own room, or making her bed, before the sister who was appointed to wait upon her, was up; and not only helping her, but by her pious conversation, good advice, and a thousand nameless kindnesses, serving her in much more essential ways; so that when she quitted us, the poor girl was quite in despair, saying she had lost her all.

“Her attention to our abbess was accompanied by an air

of respectful deference, which never for an instant forsook her. She never pardoned herself the very slightest omission as it respected her; and if she had, by the least thing, (though unwittingly) given her a moment's pain, she always instantly threw herself on her knees, and most humbly implored her pardon, never closely examining on whose side the error was, so constant was her patience, even during the time in which she was persecuted almost beyond any human endurance but hers. Indeed she continually acted in the same manner to others, for she had that sincere love of peace, that she never thought any thing but sin too great a price to pay for it. Her charity embraced every person alike, so that each individual appeared to possess the same place in her kindness and affection. It might be said with the greatest truth, that next to close communion with God, her chief delight was to make others happy: so that what was originally bestowed upon her by sweetness of temper, high birth, and exquisitely cultivated taste, grace had softened down, blended, and grafted upon the root of Christian love, meekness, and humility. She loved retirement in her room, and never was seen passing or re-passing, but to visit or console the sick. This indeed occurred continually, as she was always sent for by all who were in any distress. She possessed a peculiar talent for entering, not only into the griefs, but into the most minute shades of the feelings of others, but without weakening or flattering them. Every body who visited her cell (and that was every body in affliction) was quite sure of being well received. It was observed that no one, even amongst those who entered it with the most dejected countenances, ever quitted her without being more disposed both to find consolation, and to perform firmly her duty.

"Her devotion, solid as it was, had no austerity; so that all the children, even the very least, loved to approach her, and often asked as a reward to visit her. She had always some little good word to give them; but with sweetness and reverence, and not too long. Even to them, she laid herself out to be kind; for whenever she had any little delicacy sent her, which often happened, as she was universally respected and beloved, she would only just taste it, out of civility, though a great invalid, and set it apart to keep it for them. It was only on festival days that the bishop allowed her to join the community at recreation, where she was always asked for, and

her society earnestly sought. Though she was so much looked up to, on account of her rare acquirements as well as her eminent piety, her society was so far from imposing any constraint, that if she was a few moments later than usual, the most earnest enquiries were always made after her; and if from indisposition or from devotion she spent the time in her room, the disappointment was visible on every countenance.

"She was very reserved in mentioning her hardships and trials. Indeed all ill-usage appeared to slide at once off her mind, as the rain off a polished laurel leaf. On the contrary, the least instance of kindness was never forgotten, but was often the subject of her letters; so that it has happened, that persons who had continually maltreated her in the most scandalous manner, have had the shame of being thanked by her friends for their kindness, which, if it happened but in one instance, her grateful heart never failed to record. It was not from dissimulation or reserve, nor even, if one may so say, from a point of duty, that she forbore to speak of her afflictions; but it seemed as though her heart was so full of heavenly joy and peace, and so replete with love to others, that they did not in reality occupy her mind.

"Mde. du Valois was very assiduous in working with her hands, being always occupied when in conversation, with her spinning, knitting, or other useful work; the fruits of which she always distributed amongst others, never reserving anything for herself."

After the death of Louis the fourteenth, when the other nuns of Port Royal were recalled, persons interested themselves particularly in behalf of Mde. du Valois, who was the only one still debarred from receiving the sacraments. God raised up to her a powerful and able protectress, in the dowager Princess of Condé. But as her friends wished to avoid hurting the feelings of the Cardinal de Noailles, by placing her in his diocese; they did not seek to unite her with the other nuns of Port Royal in the monastery of Malnoue. The place chosen for her residence was the abbey of Estrées, a very respectable monastery in the diocese of Evreux; where she was to be received with honour as a guest, instead of being guarded as a prisoner.

In the mean time, the Cardinal de Noailles, deeply penitent for the part he had taken in the destruction of Port Royal,

resolved, as far as possible, to repair the evils his irresolution had occasioned. He had long observed in secret the conduct of Mde. du Valois. Convinced, by her unshaken firmness united with meekness and patience, of her extraordinary piety, he began to honour her as a saint : and, unasked, and of his own accord, freely proposed to her an immediate participation in the sacrament. He issued an order, that, in passing from Mantes to Evreux, she should pay a visit of some considerable time at Paris, where she should have full liberty, as often she as pleased, to visit all her Port Royal sisters, and other christian friends. To do her greater honour, it was fixed that she should receive the sacrament at the great church of St. Geneviève. From motives of delicacy to the Cardinal, who had so long withheld her from participating in it, she herself fixed the time at four in the morning, with a view to privacy ; but such was the deep interest excited by her constancy and piety, that notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, and the severity of the season, the cathedral was thronged by an immense concourse of people, whom a sympathy with her wrongs had collected together. They stood in profound silence, uncovered, during the ceremony ; and scarcely was the service concluded, when the whole assembly, as with one accord, prostrated themselves to give thanks with her and for her. The tears which flowed from every eye sufficiently shewed their sincerity. On this happy termination of her sufferings, Mde. du Valois was quite overpowered. When however she was at length sufficiently able to compose herself to speak, she said that she had at length obtained the summit of all her desires. "In short," said she, "but one moment can exceed the joy of this, that in which I shall be dissolved, to be united for ever with that Saviour in whose body and blood I have now had the favour again to participate."

This last wish was not, however, to be immediately granted. The virtue of this admirable nun had passed through the trial of adversity and contumely ; it was now to endure the yet more difficult trial of honour and sudden prosperity.

The Princess of Condé, her friend and protectress, was equally delighted with her new friend, and proud of having compassed the deliverance of so eminent a saint. She was also very anxious to profit by Mde. du Valois' stay in Paris, to edify herself and all her numerous friends by her conversa-

tion, which was as agreeable to her as a woman of literature, as it was valuable on account of her piety. She was influenced also by another motive ; she was resolved to do public honour to the virtue of her friend, and to hold her forth as an object of public respect, in the very midst of her most determined and powerful enemies. She therefore obtained the Cardinal's permission to have her at her own palace, where she appropriated to her a suite of apartments. She also took her for three weeks to the calvary of the Luxemburg, where she was compelled to receive the visits and congratulations of a vast concourse of persons distinguished alike for rank, talent, and merit. Princes and princesses, cardinals, dukes, bishops, vied with each other in waiting upon her and shewing her marked deference and honour. Amongst this multitude, she was not the least glad to see her dear friends, the two ladies of Chartres, who came to Paris to see her once more.

All her visitors were edified by her modesty, her love of silence and seclusion, and her enlightened piety ; but above all, with her reserve, in answering the multitude of questions addressed to her concerning her persecutions. This she did with so adroit and spontaneous a generosity, that she seemed naturally, when questioned concerning her hardships, only to remember instances of kindness. So that all her most bitter persecutors, who trembled for fear of detection, were astonished at finding themselves treated with unusual respect, on account of some single instance of kindness, which she had contrived to select, out of years of unmitigated barbarity and ill-treatment. She seemed an instance of the common proverb, that whilst the evil spirit furnishes the memories of evil men with a record of injuries, in order to torment them with baleful passions and gloomy anticipations, a guardian angel stores that of the just with images of good, which gild the future with hope, and refresh the heart for the present, by spontaneously suggesting happy and tranquilizing recollections. The mode however in which she spoke of her enemies was by no means peculiar to Mde. du Valois ; all the nuns of Port Royal spoke of their persecutors in the same terms of kindness.

Whilst at Paris she made the most diligent inquiries respecting the unknown visitor who had so seasonably met her on the road from Chartres to Mantes ; but she never could obtain the least information, nor meet with tidings of any

person in any degree answering to her description.

Mde. du Valois then went to visit her Port Royal sisters at Malnoue, where she staid a considerable time, to the very great joy and comfort of both parties. She also, at the wish of the princess of Condé, visited the inmates of several other convents, who had heard of her piety and misfortunes, and who were exceedingly anxious to see her.

Mde. du Valois, however, was far averse from seeking honour of men. Therefore, after staying a few weeks at Paris which was an indispensable mark of respect to her benevolent friend, the princess of Condé, she prepared to quit the palace where she was treated with the highest respect and the most distinguished consideration, to go to her future habitation, the monastery of Etrées. The princess, though unable from her own infirmities to accompany her, would not suffer her to go alone. Accordingly, two of her intimate friends, who had formed sentiments of the deepest veneration and attachment to Mde. du Valois, determined to accompany her the whole way, and to prepare the community at Etrées to receive her with the respect to which she was so justly entitled.

She then set out on her journey, rejoicing to return to her beloved retirement, and to have escaped from that crowded metropolis, where she had received some of the most extraordinary honours that ever were paid to a nun, with as much indifference and tranquility of mind, as if she had been holding the recreation in the seclusion of a monastery.

The community of Etrées, where she was to be placed, consisted at that period of thirty-five nuns. The eldest was thirty-five years old, and the youthful abbess only about eighteen. All the ladies in that convent were sprung from highly respectable families, and had enjoyed a superior education; their conduct also was very decorous; but they were by no means distinguished for piety. They were indeed kind and well disposed, and their conduct was far from exhibiting any flagrant irregularity; but they were totally ignorant of spiritual religion. And though they had refused the direction of the Jesuits, yet they were by no means pleased at the idea of having a Port Royal nun imposed upon them.

The ladies who accompanied Mde. du Valois immediately perceived the secret reluctance of the nuns, notwithstanding the politeness and even kindness with which they received

her. They therefore requested to speak with the young abbess in private; and not only dispelled all her apprehensions, by telling her of the amiable qualities of the nun they had brought; but they soon excited the most powerful interest and sympathy in her mind, by drawing a lively picture of all her sufferings, her virtues, and her piety. So that when her conductresses, at the end of two or three days, took their leave, they left the whole community deeply impressed with respect, veneration, and pity for her, and congratulating themselves on the prize providence had bestowed on their house.

Experience soon convinced them of the truth of the ladies' assertions. They all treated her with the greatest respect, kindness, and attention; and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to give her comfort, and make her happy. They studied to anticipate all her wants by furnishing her with books, prints, and every other amusement they could think of, and giving her full liberty to attend the sacraments, correspond with her friends, and, in short do whatever she would have wished had she been in her own community.

Nor was the kindness of the amiable nuns lost to themselves before God. Mde. du Valois became to their house as the ark to that of Obed Edom: and she was the blessed instrument of God, used to diffuse the knowledge and the practice of truth, throughout the whole monastery. Her pious example, her edifying conversation, and the relations she made of the saints she had known at Port Royal, made a lively impression on them; and by the grace of God they became thoroughly changed. The monastery of Etrées set an example of piety and regularity; and its instruction soon proved a source of blessing to the whole neighbourhood. The young abbess became truly converted; and being aware of the heavy responsibility of her charge, and that others possessed not only the graces but the gifts requisite for it, in a greater degree than herself, she with unfeigned humility gave up the office and became a simple nun.

Nor was the usefulness of Mde. du Valois by any means merely confined to the monastery of Etrées. She had the pleasure and satisfaction of proving equally a blessing to her friends and to her enemies. The Princess of Condé maintained a continual correspondence with her, which terminated in her complete conversion. But, amongst all the friends whom her

eminent piety had gained, none was more zealous than the Cardinal of Noailles. He also requested permission to correspond with her. He became her public and zealous protector. He even sent her an edition of his works, and especially of his beautiful pastoral instruction of 1719; nor did he fail, amongst other proofs of esteem, continually to recommend himself to her prayers.

She continued an example of edification to the house of Etrées till her latest breath. She was the consolation of the afflicted, and the strength of the feeble. The three last years of her life were spent in almost continual bodily sufferings. At length she was seized with her mortal sickness which continued for six weeks. During twelve days and thirteen nights she was in the agonies of death. She never once, in all this while, opened her mouth to complain. For a considerable part of the time she could not speak; but whenever it pleased the Lord to open her lips, her mouth showed forth his praise. She seemed, amidst the most excruciating pains, to forget present sufferings in the sense of eternal enjoyments. She shewed perfect detachment from this earth, and all her thoughts were in heaven. She perpetually had read to her the accounts of the passion of our Saviour. The whole monastery being collected round her bed in tears, and being cast down by the deepest sorrow, she alone retained her presence of mind, and consoled and supported them in a manner equally sympathising and vigorous. As for herself, her joy was uninterrupted. Her death was not merely peaceful, it was triumphant and glorious. She was released on the 7th of November, 1722, on the day preceding that on which forty years before, she had consecrated herself to God by the indissoluble vows of religion.

No epitaph by any human pen has reached our time; but her eulogium is written in the sanctity and exemplary piety of the community she left behind to mourn her loss. Even now her memory is held there in eternal benediction. Whilst, in the long bright summer's eve the villagers teach their infants to clasp their little hands, and lisp their prayers over the green sods that mark her grave; they little think that the blessings with which God has thus comforted their neighbourhood, were owing, in the first instance, to Port Royal, and to the fidelity with which the M. Angélique, when a girl of

seventeen, corresponded with the religious impressions which the grace of God then vouchsafed to her.

Such was Port Royal. The foundation of its faith was scripture; the object of its trust was Christ, the great sacrifice for sin; and their mode of apprehending him was by a spiritual and divine teaching, the work of God upon that heart which waits upon him in spirit and in truth. Thus taught of the Lord, their mouths uttered the praises of God, and their lives exhibited the genuine fruits of faith. Such was the source of the holiness of their conversation, the unshaken constancy of their perseverance, and the triumphant blessedness of their ends. And, whatever minor differences may distinguish various bodies of christians, experience as well as scripture declares, that wherever these polar truths have been faithfully and spiritually maintained, the same strength of faith, the same good fruits, the same blessed ends have uniformly appeared; bearing testimony, that this is life eternal, to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent; being taught these things by a diligent searching of scripture, which testifies of him; and having them imprinted on the heart by that divine Spirit, without the teaching of which, no man can, in truth, call Christ, Lord, or so believe with the heart unto righteousness, as to bring forth the fruits which are of the Spirit by faith.

Such was the end of Port Royal. "O holy valley! O sacred abode! O ashes of the saints that were laid therein. Thy monastery may indeed be destroyed: but posterity will know, what neither the lapse of ages nor the wickedness of man can ever cause to be forgotten, that this holy house perished, not through fault of its own; not through internal dissension; not through remissness of the discipline which for a century had been firmly sustained; but for adhesion to conscience and an inviolable cleaving to the truth of Christ. And should ever no written monument survive, the very ruins of this holy spot will raise their voice, and bear eternal witness!"*

* From "Obedientiæ credulæ vana Religio," by Petitiépied: Vol. II. chap 9. p. 21, &c. 1710.



